Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk March 19, 2017

North & West edition No 756



TRAVEL

Will Southeastern win franchise again?

Consultation begins for next big train contract

TECHNOLOGY

Apple founder backs entrepreneur

We meet the man whose app could transform video

POLITICS

Ukip calls for MP to quit

After Tories hit with big fine, rivals demand Mackinlay resigns

TELEVISION

Auditions fail to have the X Factor

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Are we on track for more train disappointment?

FOR those who do not catch a regular train into London, the relentless chorus of complaints about our rail services may sometimes come as a little bit of a surprise.

After all, if your daily commute is catching the 8.14am service from Maidstone to Ashford, the chances are you always get a seat and the train runs pretty much to time.

However, for those who board a train an hour earlier heading into London, the picture is very different.

Because then boarding a train becomes a precision exercise. You need to get on the platform just before the rush and, more importantly, ensure you are standing in the perfect position for where you know the doors will open. Stand too far to one side and you're doomed, stand too face on, and you may find those getting off block your entry and deprive you of that one spare seat you spotted.

And woe betide you if the dreaded announcement of "this train will this morning be formed of six carriages" (when you know eight is barely sufficient) is heard. Because that will pretty much guarantee that not only are you standing for most of the journey, but you'll be nose-to-armpit with a fellow traveller for the duration.

As you stand there trying desperately to balance comfortably, you ponder just how much you pay for this service...

The consultation began this week into the next franchise. The question is, how can anyone, to coin a cliche, make our trains run on time? From Connex to Southeastern, we have struggled over the years and barring an investment almost unimaginable in this era, are we not facing more of the same? So many of us rely on trains, to expect any franchise to transform it may simply be the impossible dream.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Troubled trust set to exit special measures at last

By Tom Pyman
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IMPROVEMENT: Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham

THE trust running Medway Maritime Hospital has finally exited special measures after almost four years, following a positive report from the chief inspector of hospitals.

Health chiefs previously rated the trust 'inadequate', with the A&E department at its Gillingham hospital described as "not able to cope".

Health watchdog the Care Quality Commission also described the trust's state of health as "extremely concerning" and reported that even senior figures had felt "bullied".

Since then, however, the trust has seemingly been on an upward curve, and has been praised for its improvements by a number of senior officials, including the health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Now, after a CQC inspection just before Christmas, England's chief inspector of hospitals, Professor Sir Mike Richards, has recommended the trust should exit special measures.

The executive team, although fairly new, was performing as an effective unit with a shared vision and clarity of purpose, chiefs found, while staff spoke of a significantly better organisational culture.

There had been improvements made to the triaging and management of patients in the emergency department, patients were no longer treated in a corridor and the handovers and safety briefings in the emergency department were effective and ensured staff managed risks to people.

Although assessment of risks to emergency patients' safety had improved, there were still concerns over staffing levels in the emergency care and maternity departments.

Ensuring all staff have appropriate mandatory training, and receive an annual appraisal, was among the ways inspectors said the trust could improve further as NHS Improvement bosses confirmed the exit on Friday.

Sir Mike said: "There is no doubt that substantial improvements have been made. The leadership team is now fully established and there is a strong sense of forward momentum."

Chief executive, Lesley Dwyer, added: "There is a very exciting future ahead for Medway NHS Foundation Trust and as staff, we are all honoured to be a part of it."

'Unacceptable' number of Gatwick night flights blasted by councillors

THE number of night flights at Gatwick airport must be reduced to protect communities in west Kent, councillors are warning.

A report was this week discussed by Kent County Council's environment and transport cabinet committee, which outlines the local authority's response to a government consultation on night flights, which ended last month.

In that document, the Department for Transport sets a new environmental objective to "encourage the use of quieter aircraft to limit or reduce the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night, while maintaining the existing benefits of night flights".

For Gatwick, the DfT proposes to retain the existing limit of flights arriving or departing between 11.30pm and 6am - currently 3,250 in winter and 11,200 in summer - and reduce the amount of noise energy that can be produced over the same period.

However, council chiefs insist this plan doesn't do enough to help the affected constituencies of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling.

The report states: "The current number of permitted night flights is unacceptable and the DfT should reduce the night movement limit at Gatwick to at least a level that is comparable with Heathrow".

It adds that night-time disturbance can cause next day tiredness and fatigue, while there is also growing research into the effects of night-time aircraft noise on the educational attainment of children, cardiovascular health and psychological well-being.

In the meeting at County Hall, the council's cabinet member for environment and transport, Conservative councillor Matthew Balfour, told colleagues: "The people that we represent need to be properly defended from what is really awful intrusion."

Craig David confirmed as star turn at Castle Concerts

COMEBACK king Craig David has been confirmed as one of the headliners of this year's Castle Concerts in Rochester.

The star, nominated for a Brit Award last month for his number one album Following My Institution, will perform at Rochester Castle on July 13. His debut album, Born To Do It, had topped the chart 16 years earlier.

Medway Council's portfolio holder in charge of events Howard Doe said: ''This show is going to be a real treat for fans. The small and unique venue creates a wonderful atmosphere, quite an exclusive feel as only a lucky few get their hands on tickets compared to larger arenas like the O2.''

Tickets for the open-air show will go on sale at 10am on March 30.

Council chamber to double as courtroom in Town Hall

COURT hearings are set to be held in the council chamber of Tunbridge Wells Town Hall following the signing of a new partnership.

The borough council and HM Courts & Tribunals Service agreed the deal after the closure of the town's county and family courts.

Following a successful trial, the courts service will stage suitable hearings on one day a week.

The cases being heard would otherwise take place in Maidstone or Hastings.

Cabinet member Paul Barrington-King said: ''This is an innovative agreement. We have secured a service in our area avoiding the need for people, who may not have the means or time to travel a considerable distance to access a court.''

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More big names announced for free festival

FORMER Joy Division and New Order guitarist Peter Hook and eighties stars The Christians have been confirmed as the additional headliners for this year's free Dartford Festival.

They join the likes of Bromley's X Factor winner Matt Terry and nineties band Space at the show in Central Park which takes place on July 15.

Peter Hook and The Light will play hits from the two bands - having previously performed at the now defunct Hop Farm Festival in Paddock Wood and Canterbury's Lounge on the Farm.

The Christians are marking their 30th anniversary, playing hits from their big selling eponymous album and follow-up Colour.

'Light at the end of the tunnel' as 550 homes approved for Tesco site

By Luke May
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PLANS to build nearly 550 new homes on the site of a failed supermarket development were this week given approval by Dartford Borough Council - sparking the long overdue regeneration of a notorious grot spot.

Developer Meyer Homes claims it could put the town "back on the map" as it looks to create 548 homes, as well as shops and even a micro-brewery along Lowfield Street.

The street has been littered with hoardings and derelict buildings since Tesco first gained approval to build on the site in 2011.

But after years of neglect, the supermarket chain announced it would not be building in the town in 2014, and the property was sold off the following year to real estate investment firm Meyer Bergman.

Following Thursday night's approval, demolition works along the street could start by the end of this year. The first phase of development works will consist of four residential blocks offering 188 homes as well as a separate commercial building.



FUTURE: How it could look

Ahead of the meeting of Dartford council's development control board, neighbours raised concerns that new homes will bring added pressure to the town's services.

Another respondent added the development "will look like an ugly housing estate and that the flats on the park will be an eyesore", also claiming the town "does not need more retail areas as there are too many empty units already".

But Jamie Pearson, director of Meyer Homes, claims the company has taken the town's needs into account.

He said: "We have worked hard to ensure these proposals meet the needs of the local community by bringing forward a world-class development on a site that has lay in waiting for so many years.

"The plans will put Dartford back on the map as a town which is open for business and a desirable location to both live and work."

"The redevelopment of the northern end of the site will be delivered and completed within the next few years, meaning local people will finally see a light at the end of the tunnel for the redevelopment of Lowfield Street."



RETURN: Paul O'Grady

Star O'Grady to host reborn Blind Date

PAUL O'Grady has been confirmed as the host of Blind Date when it returns later this year.

The entertainment show, made famous by presenter Cilla Black, has been updated for its comeback as it prepares to air for the first time in more than 13 years - this time on Channel 5.

Mr O'Grady, who lives in Aldington, near Ashford, said: "I am honoured to present the brand new series and, after speaking to Channel 5, I know the series is in safe hands. I can't wait to see if we can find love."

The popular dating programme originally ran between 1985 and 2003.

Mr O'Grady, a close friend of Ms Black, hosted a one-off special in 2013 to celebrate her career in the entertainment industry.

She passed away in 2015.

Ben Frow, director of programmes for Channel 5, said: "Paul is the perfect choice to bridge the old and the new, capturing the essence and charm of a series that became staple Saturday night family viewing in living rooms up and down the country, whilst attracting and appealing to a whole new generation of TV viewers."

During its run, three pairs of Blind Date contestants married; Ms Black attending all of the couple's weddings.

Ribbon to be cut on all-new fire station

THE second of two new stations providing fire cover for Medway is being officially opened this Thursday.

It will see the unveiling of the building in Watling Street, which became operational last month. It was built alongside the 60-year-old existing site which will now be sold.

It has one fire engine and one incident support vehicle, is open 24 hours a day and will be a base for 22 firefighters and managers.

It follows the one at Marconi Way, Rochester, which opened last year.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service chairman Nick Chard said: ''It gives us a base that is fit for purpose for modern day appliances and equipment, as well as being more energy efficient than the former station. I believe this is a very real demonstration of our commitment to provide a good level of emergency response for local people, providing an effective base for our firefighters to help keep local people safe.''

Centre still shut after 'suspicious' blaze

POLICE are continuing to investigate the cause of a fire in a Gravesend leisure centre which has forced it to close ''for the foreseeable future''.

The blaze at the Cygnet Leisure Centre last Friday, completely destroyed an office next to the gymnasium and caused smoke damage.

The council is still assessing the extent of the damage.

However, the final repair bill is set to exceed thousands of pounds. Police say they believe the fire at the Old Perry Street site is suspicious.

A Gravesham council spokesperson said: ''Cygnet Leisure Centre will be closed until further notice and we will be working with Gravesham Council Leisure Limited, which operates the site, to partially open the centre within the next week or so.

''We apologise for any inconvenience caused and it is hoped to get as many of the facilities open at Cygnet as soon as we can.''

Cascades Leisure Centre in Thong Lane is open as usual.

Family's tribute after death in car park

THE family of Giles Metcalfe, 43, whose body was discovered in a Tunbridge Wells car park earlier this month, have paid tribute to him, describing him as ''kind at heart and very generous''.

A police investigation into the circumstances around his death is on-going, following the discovery of his body in a stairway at the Torrington Road car park in the early hours of March 7.

In a statement,his family said: ''We are devastated and shocked at what has happened to Giles and the way he has died. Giles was loved very much by family and friends. He was kind at heart and very generous.

''Giles loved all animals and will be missed by all that knew him in and out of his workplace. He is at rest now and we ask that our privacy is respected at this difficult time.''

James Marshall-Gunn, 29, of Hadlow Road, Tonbridge and Dean Lewis, aged 34 and of no fixed address, have both been charged with Mr Metcalfe's murder. Both have been remanded in custody,

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Last gasp plea as D-day nears for Lower Thames Crossing

By Tom Pyman
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AN "eleventh hour plea for common sense" has been issued to the transport secretary over the Lower Thames Crossing.

Dartford MP Gareth Johnson and borough council leader Jeremy Kite have written a joint letter to Chris Grayling in a last ditch attempt to persuade him the new crossing must be built east of Gravesend - a location dubbed Option C by Highways England

Talking about the announcement, which is expected this month. Mr Johnson said: "Even at this eleventh hour we need Chris Grayling to understand that another crossing at Dartford would be catastrophic for the area.

"Our roads cannot cope now with the congestion caused by the crossing, and the pollution levels are dangerously high, so this is the last opportunity to convince Mr Grayling that building the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend and not at Dartford is the right approach.

"It is an eleventh hour plea for common sense to prevail, we cannot have another crossing at Dartford and the years of road works and misery that it would bring."

In the letter, the pair said: "We urge you to make the right decision – right for our region, right for motorists, right for air quality, right for local people and right for the economy.



PLAN: How Option C could look if it gets the go-ahead

"If our country is to continue to prosper as we widen our economic horizons - as we know it can - it needs a commitment to the right infrastructure, not just the cheap or easy solution. Residents and motorists can see that only Option C provides the necessary resilience to keep our region and economy moving.

"We have, as I hope you know, been making our points robustly but reasonably for many months now.

"We have done so because we know how catastrophic a failure to provide a new crossing away from Dartford would be – to health, to the wellbeing of local people, to the economy, to ambition and to growth. It is time for the right decision and your commitment."

However, the plans to build a crossing at Option C have been opposed by locals, with county councillor Bryan Sweetland stepping down from a cabinet post as a result of the row, in which he also described the government's consultation as a "sales brochure for Option C".

Motorcyclist killed in smash at Manston

TRIBUTES have been paid to a "hardworking family man" killed in a motorbike smash last weekend.

Father-of-two Arturas Butkus, 37, died when his black Triumph Speed Triple hit a white Citroen Berlingo on the B2190 Spitfire Way at Manston, at 11.25am on Sunday.

His family said: "He was a hardworking family man. He was loved by everyone who knew him."

Hunt on for £26m leisure centre firm

THE hunt for an operator of a £26m leisure centre planned for Dover has begun after the district council this week issued an invitation to tender.

Located on a 2.1 hectare site in Whitfield, facilities are set to include a new eight-lane swimming pool, four-court sports hall, squash courts, gym, 3G pitches and room for 250 cars.

Another strike threat

THE long-running dispute between the RMT and Southern Rail has conjured up another day of strikes.

The rail workers' union confirmed it will be walking out on April 4, in a row over driver-only trains on the rail network.

Southern operates services from Tonbridge to Redhill and Ashford to the south coast.

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Visitors hide as wild animal escapes from zoo enclosure

Families had to lock themselves in toilet cubicles at a wildlife park last Sunday after a cheetah escaped from its enclosure.

The cat was on the prowl for some 25 minutes at the Port Lympne Reserve, between Hythe and Ashford, before being encouraged back into its home with food.

As is standard practice, visitors were ushered to what the park call "safe areas", with some barricading themselves inside toilets.

One visitor, Alice Snape, tweeted: "Locked in the loos as a cheetah on the loose OMG."

Adrian Harland, animal director at the park, said: "The cheetah was calm and pacing the enclosure fence looking to get back in.

"Some food was thrown into the enclosure and the cheetah walked back in to get it. No vet intervention was needed. The full escape procedure was run because the safari lorries travel past the enclosure. This particular cheetah was no real threat to our guests. He only climbed out to get back with his mother after having been separated to stop him eating all her dinner.

"We have secured the enclosure's perimeter fencing to ensure the cheetah cannot climb out again."



Belt up on our roads after worrying number killed

OVER a third of people killed in car crashes on Kent's roads were not wearing their seatbelts, according to figures from Kent County Council.

And that has prompted a stark reminder to motorists of the dangers of failing to buckle up on the county's roads.

According to the figures compiled by the KCC Road Safety Team, 54 people were killed as the result of crashes on the county's roads in 2015 and 31 of these were the driver or a passenger - 11 of those killed were found not to have been wearing their seatbelts.

The figures have been released to coincide with a KCC campaign.

KCC cabinet member for environment and transport Matthew Balfour said: "There's no excuse for people to not use them every time they get in the vehicle.

"Seatbelts have been compulsory since 1983 and people have a legal duty to ensure they are wearing one.

"For those that feel seatbelts are uncomfortable or cause injury, the discomfort from being thrown through a windscreen, being pinned against a steering wheel or being crushed by another car is significantly worse.

"It's worrying more than a third of people who died were not wearing a seatbelt.

"Over 70 per cent of the crashes where people are killed or seriously injured happen on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or 40mph.

"Seatbelts are simple. They save lives."

Phone switch-off a hit

A PUBLIC school where girls switched off their mobile phones for a three-day 'digital fast' has proved such a success the students are keen to repeat it.

Pupils at Benenden School went without phones and any access to social media to reduce their reliance on digital technology.

Ride for hospice funds

KENT's biggest charity ride is back for its eighth year on April 30, offering cyclists of all abilities a chance to ride one of the three distances and raise funds for Pilgrims Hospices.

More than 1,200 riders will take part in the race which starts at the University of Kent.

Last chance to have say

TIME is running out to tell the independent Local Government Boundary Commission what you think of proposals for new council ward boundaries across Ashford - a move which would increse the number of councillors.

The public consultation closes on April 3.

See consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

Le Shuttle's 25 millionth

EUROTUNNEL saw the 25 millionth truck use its freight service in the early hours of Friday morning, since the Le Shuttle began back on July 25, 1994.

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PCC candidate's jail term

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk

A CANDIDATE for Kent's police and crime commissioner was this week starting a seven-month jail sentence - and been banned from standing in an election for the next five years.

Steve Uncles, 52, of Shears Close, Dartford was found guilty of seven counts of forgery and two counts of falsifying a statement relating to candidates on election nomination.

Maidstone Crown Court heard that prior to the local elections in April 2013, Uncles submitted nomination papers, representing the English Democrats, to a number of local councils.

But inspections revealed that some nominated candidates did not exist and Uncles had also made up the addresses where he claimed they lived.

He even used the identities of two elderly people without their explicit knowledge.

In May 2013, Uncles admitted forging a signature as well as completing and handing in a number of forms.

He claimed he believed the candidates did exist even though he had not met them personally.

Following an investigation, Uncles was charged with the offences in February 2014.



SENTENCED: English Democrats candidate will not be able to stand for election for five years

Before his conviction, Uncles ran for Kent's police and crime commissioner in 2016, but finished bottom of the pile of the six candidates, gaining just over 8,000 votes.

Investigating officer detective sergeant Alec Wood said: "These actions have deceived voters into casting a vote for persons who simply could never have taken office. They undermine the electoral process which is the mechanism by which democratic societies determine the direction and control of our communities and society."

Robin Tilbrook, a founding member and chair of the English Democrats, confirmed the party had accepted Uncles' resignation from the party.

He said: "It seems to me that he's been convicted for something pretty silly, rather than something where someone commits burglarly and they don't go to prison."

Mr Tilbrook added that while the former regional leader "should not have" committed the crimes, "it did not make any difference" to the elections concerned.

A source close to Uncles claims he is appealing the court's decision.

IPCC begin murder probe

THE Independent Police Complaints Commission which is conducting a probe into the Met Police's handling of a case in which Gravesend chef Daniel Whitworth, 21, was murdered is set to begin interviewing officers.

Stephen Port was sentenced to life imprisonment in November for the murder of Mr Whitwort and three other young men he stalked on gay dating site, Grindr.

Mr Whitworth's family recently launched an appeal for information ahead of planned legal action against the force's handling of the case.

High speed wooden train

FOLKESTONE toy firm Bigjigs has produced a wooden replica of a Southeastern high speed train - designed for toddlers' train sets.

A percentage of the sales from all toys sold will be donated to Southeastern's two chosen charities, the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and the Railway Children.

Bigjigs managing director Liz Ireland said: "We welcome this design into the range."

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Will it be all change with our train franchise?

Consultation is under way ahead of the awarding of the next train contract but Southeastern may face a tough test

By Chris Britcher
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TRAIN firm Southeastern confirmed it would be bidding to retain its franchise for Kent's main rail services, but it faces a tough test after the government spelt out what it expects of the winner.

The firm has held what is known as the south eastern franchise of the national rail network since April 2006.

It's existing contract - controversially extended from March 2014 for a further four years without competitive tender by the coalition government following a review of all franchise agreements - is due to expire in June 2018.

But Southeastern has been dogged by complaints from customers and pressure from local politicians as to the standard and reliability of its services - particularly when it comes to peak time services into and out of London.

And despite considerable investment in recent years, many feel the brand has been so badly damaged, now is the time for a change.

This week, the Department for Transport confirmed the start of a 10-week public consultation ahead of awarding the franchise. It outlined a host of possible options to improve services, among them dropping first class carriages in order to free up more space and introducing additional high speed services down to the south coast in order to cut down journey times.

Southeastern's parent company Go-Ahead told KoS this week: "We can confirm that we would expect to submit a strong bid for the south eastern franchise when the time comes and would wish to retain the franchise we currently operate. However, as always, this will depend on the DfT contract terms."

The south eastern network, serviced by Southeastern, currently handles 640,000 passenger journeys on 1,900 train services every weekday.

Now the government wants passengers, local councils and other interested parties to help dictate what the next operator will deliver.

Secretary of state for transport, Chris Grayling, said: "Passengers on a new south eastern franchise from 2018 will enjoy modern trains with more space and a more punctual and reliable service.

"This consultation sets out what we expect the next operator to deliver for passengers, including working more closely with Network Rail to ensure a focus on performance, and innovative use of technology to improve both ticket buying and compensation if things do go wrong."

Working far closer with Network Rail - which handles the rail infrastructure - is a key aspect of the government's approach to rail services. In truth, much of the problems Southeastern has faced has been as much caused by issues handled by Network Rail, such as engineering work or track problems, as its trains running on time. By uniting the two central strands, government hopes to iron out much of the problems.

This will be the first franchise to have an integrated operating team between train services and infrastructure. This means that the new operator must form an alliance with Network Rail, working as "one team to deliver a better railway for passengers".

The DfT says its ambitions for the franchise include creating more space for passengers by running longer trains and upgrading or replacing older trains; increasing reliability and reducing delays by the train operator working closely with Network Rail; improving compensations arrangements with a simple automated system; introduction of a smarter payment system, including mobile phones; and improving customer service with staff able to respond quickly and effectively to passenger's needs.

The consultation document adds: "A further consideration is the existing provision of first class seating. We recognise first class tickets remain popular on certain routes, notably on the south eastern main line to Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. However, removing it would create more room for passengers, which would be important during peak hours."

It also added: "We want to speed up longer-distance journeys which have a very long journey time relative to the length of the route, for instance between London and Hastings.

"One option is to operate High Speed services between St Pancras and Hastings, Bexhill and Rye via Ashford International.

"We are also exploring various options for reducing the journey time on the existing mainline route between Hastings and Charing Cross via Tonbridge. For instance, reducing calls at less well used stations could deliver an hourly fast service. Other services would still stop at these stations. This approach could also be adopted on other routes, such as Tonbridge to Ashford.

"Although we would be delivering faster journeys, we recognise this has the potential to inconvenience passengers that currently use those intermediate station."

The DfT consultation will run for 10 weeks, closing on May 23, 2017, with a series of public events being staged with experts on hand.

Kent County Council cabinet member for environment and transport, Matthew Balfour, said: "We welcome this consultation by the DfT and would encourage everyone who uses the rail service in Kent to take part.

"This consultation will help KCC ensure the best rail service for all passengers using the new South Eastern franchise.

"KCC is already represented in the DfT's new franchise team. The council will respond to the consultation to ensure a better rail service for all Kent's rail passengers in the new franchise."

KCC has previously spoken out about Southeastern's service and supported a call for its metro services to be switched instead to Transport for London - a move rejected by the government.

A spokesperson for Southeastern added: "We're focused on delivering our current franchise and will continue to invest over £70million in improvements in the areas that matter most to our passengers.

"Our recent National Rail Passenger Survey customer satisfaction scores have risen, reflecting that passengers are noticing the improvements being made; but we know there is still more work to do and we will continue to work with Network Rail to improve the experience passengers have when travelling with us.

"We operate one of the busiest networks in the UK with passenger numbers rising 40 per cent in the past decade. We welcome any changes to the franchise specifications that will improve the services our passengers receive and will continue to work with the Department for Transport on this."

The DfT confirmed Southeastern was one of those eligible to place a bid along with other approved operators. It will, almost inevitably, be seen as the favourite to once again win the franchise.

To take part in the consultation and details of the public event taking place, visit: bit.ly/2lfbiDP.



DELAYS: Complaints about Southeastern will weigh heavily when it comes to awarding the next franchise



CHANGES: Could first class carriages be ditched in new franchise?



CONTROVERSY: Craig Mackinlay beat off Nigel Farage in South Thanet in 2015 but his party has come under fire this week over an expenses scandal. Photo: Ady Kerry

Ukip hunts potential candidates as pressure grows on Mackinlay

The Electoral Commission this week found the Conservatives "understated" campaign spending in South Thanet, as the MP was quizzed by police. Now Ukip appears to be preparing for a by-election

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

UKIP has confirmed it has opened nominations for candidates to stand in South Thanet after an expenses scandal erupted this week.

And Chris Wells, leader of the only Ukip-controlled council in the country, said constituency MP Craig Mackinlay should step down "if he has a decent, moral bone in his body" as the county begins to draw breath after an explosive few days.

Speculation has gathered steam that a re-run of the 2015 vote could be triggered shortly as pressure grows on Mr Mackinlay and the Conservative Party.

Watchdog the Electoral Commission found the Tories appeared to understate its campaign spending in the key battleground seat, where they successfully fought off the challenge of former Ukip leader Nigel Farage.

The commission highlighted the role played by a team of national officials based in the constituency during the 2015 general election, including a senior campaigns officer, a senior press adviser and two political advisers.

Although they are not named in the report, the advisers have previously been reported to include Theresa May's current chief of staff Nick Timothy, who was an adviser to her in the Home Office.

The Conservatives argued that they had, unusually, based their national anti-Ukip campaign in the Kent constituency, mirroring the fact that Ukip's national campaign was also there.

However, the commission found that a proportion of the party's national spending actually related to the effort to secure the election of Mr Mackinlay and should have been declared in his election return.

"The commission cannot determine precisely what proportion of spending on the party's team in South Thanet should have been apportioned to Mr Mackinlay's campaign," it said.

"This is largely as a result of the party failing to keep records sufficient to establish the appropriate apportionment.

"However, the commission notes that as a consequence of the party reporting these costs, they were missing from Mr Mackinlay's candidate campaign expenses return.

"Consequently it appears that the party understated the spending it incurred on Mr Mackinlay's campaign, and as a result there is doubt as to the accuracy and completeness of his election expenses return."

The spending included £15,641 for rooms in the Royal Harbour Hotel in Ramsgate, which was declared as part of the party's national spending return.

The commission also found that the party failed to declare a further £3,809.03 in hotel bills for the Premier Inn in the town.

The Conservatives blamed "simple human error" but the commission said that was not a "reasonable excuse".

On the political advisers, the commission said they had played "key roles" in determining Mr Mackinlay's campaign messages and in drafting campaign material "promoting Mr Mackinlay's electoral success".

It found a "number of examples" of them commenting or advising the wording of Mr Mackinlay's campaign message and digital content, including a comment from one adviser on a YouTube video the other had created.

It stated: "Thanks... This is OK as far as it goes but why are we not trying to convey the messages better? Anybody can stand in Sandwich saying traffic is bad. The point is that Craig brings cabinet ministers here and can get things done.... Every time we communicate without the messages we are at best wasting our time and at worse losing votes."

The party also listed several other individuals as being part of the team, including volunteers providing further support, such as assisting with national tours and events held in Kent, attending Ukip rallies and events and monitoring the activities of Mr Farage.

It comes just days after reports emerged of Mr Mackinlay being questioned for six hours under caution by Kent Police last week in relation to his expenses.

Responding to inquiries about the Sun's report that Mr Mackinlay had been subject to questioning last week, the force said in a statement: "The Kent Police investigation into this complex matter is ongoing and officers continue to follow lines of inquiry.

"Therefore it would not be appropriate to comment further.

"Officers from Kent Police continue to work with the Electoral Commission as the investigation continues."

A Conservative Party spokesman said: "We are co-operating with the ongoing investigations."

Reports also suggest Kent Police will meet with the Crown Prosecution Service on Tuesday to discuss a possible prosecution, though this too has not been confirmed by any party.

Mr Mackinlay, and his office, declined to comment throughout the week and Labour's candidate in the 2015 vote, Will Scobie, has also not responded to calls.

Ukip then made the bold statement of announcing it had opened nominations for candidates to stand, even though there has been no official suggestion a by-election will be called.

Mr Farage, who until recently lived in Westerham, confirmed for a second time last weekend that he'd "probably" stand in any such scenario.

Cllr Wells told KoS: "This is systematic cheating, and if Craig Mackinlay has a decent, moral bone in his body he'll resign.

"There'll be a proper selection process but if Nigel is selected, I welcome him running and I do think he can win."

The commission also highlighted the Tories had made "numerous failures" in reporting its expenses for the Rochester and Strood by-election in 2014, in which Mark Reckless, who defected from the Conservatives to Ukip, defeated Kelly Tolhurst - a vote that would then be reversed less than 12 months later in the general election.

Consequently, the watchdog imposed a record fine of £70,000.

Commission chairman Sir John Holmes said the Tories' failure to follow the rules "undermined voters' confidence in our democratic processes" and said there was a risk political parties were seeing such fines as "a cost of doing business".

The Conservatives said they had complied fully with the commission's investigation and would pay the fine that has been imposed.

"Political parties of all colours have made reporting mistakes from time to time," a party spokesman said.

"The Labour Party and Liberal Democrats both failed to declare sums of money which constituted a larger proportion of their national expenditure in the 2015 general election.

"Both have been fined by the Electoral Commission, and the Liberal Democrats are also under police investigation.

"This is the first time the Conservative Party has been fined for a reporting error. We regret that and will continue to keep our internal processes under review to ensure this does not happen again. Given the range of technical errors made by a number of political parties and campaign groups, there also needs to be a review of how the Electoral Commission's processes and requirements could be clarified or improved."

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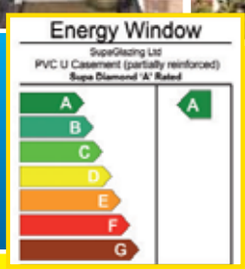


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KOS/15

Meet the man who could take world by storm with video app

The co-founder of Apple has thrown his weight behind it, but is Velapp set to be the next social media craze? We chat to entrepreneur David De Min about his Kent roots and why editing video 'live' while filming has been a long time coming

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A VIDEO editing app endorsed by the co-founder of Apple will "make a difference to people's lives", according to its Kent-based founder.

Velapp aims to save hours of time by allowing users to edit videos during the process of filming.

Currently available on Apple iPhones, before the official launch in the coming weeks will see it showcased across a number of platforms, it uses the phone's 3D touch technology to help select 'highlights'.

Users simply press harder on the screen when the best bits occur to easily cut sometimes lengthy videos down to precise points, then can share instantly via social media.

A classic example, founder David De Min says, is a toddler taking its first steps - parents tend to film for long periods in anticipation of it happening, but with Velapp, you can capture the magical moment without wasting minutes, if not hours, finding it and cutting it in subsequent editing.

The CEO, who attended Canterbury's Kent College as a teenager and still lives in the city now, told KoS how it all started on a trip to the Himalayas with his brother, Michael.

"We got two motorbikes and I was doing filming for a music video," Mr De Min said.

"Using Go Pros we filmed some of the most amazing memories.

"After two-and-a-half weeks we came back with 235 hours of footage.

"I consider myself a pro but it still took three weeks to cut it down, it was an absolute nightmare.

"I thought 'there must be a way to improve this'? I was pulling my hair out.

"You realise what the best bits are when you're filming at that time, in the moment, not afterwards, so I applied that idea to the technology, it's as simple as that."

Like many entrepreneurs, Mr De Min is a natural hustler, who has the confidence and determination to get what he wants.

When invited to an event where Steve Wozniak - the late Steve Jobs' partner in crime - was the headline speaker, he was relentless in his quest to personally pick him up and show him how Velapp works.

He went to Rolls Royce in Berkeley Square in London and demanded one of their finest models, telling them it was a great opportunity for the car manufacturer to get some exposure - an offer which they eventually accepted.

"People kept asking who I was and I told them 'I'm no one, I'm a random guy who started a little company in Kent'," he said.

"So I picked him up, demo-ed the app and he was so impressed - he gave me his business card and we've stayed in touch ever since – it's by far the coolest card I've ever seen."

These are unquestionably exciting times for Mr De Min but he has had to overcome a number of significant obstacles on the road to where he is today.

Born in Holland in 1990 to a Dutch father and an English mother, he moved to Oman as a small child before arriving in Kent in 1999.

Diagnosed with dyslexia on arrival, he attended East Court, a special school in Ramsgate, to help him build his basic academic skills.

Eventually studying IT, business studies and design and technology at Kent College, his creativity shone through - achieving 120 marks out of 120 for an A Level design project during his time on the course.

"I think I look at things in a different perspective," he said.

"I really struggle with words and I'm not good at writing but have always been quite creative.





GURU: David De Min meets his idol, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, left, who has given Velapp his backing

"You can't let a failure or a setback stop you, so many people have doubts about themselves.

"You need to have that passionate belief and I think having such a drive is helping me push forward and make a difference to people's lives, even just by saving them time – that's what keeps me going."

The biggest hurdle for him to overcome, however, was the tragic death of older brother Jamie, who lost his battle with cancer aged just 17, despite a bone marrow transplant from Mr De Min.

"It's a difficult subject but I try to look at it from a positive because he always said he wanted us to be happy, he was such an inspiration.

"It makes you think life is so short and you've got to make the most of it, and that's the attitude I take into my work as well."

Now back at his parents' home in Canterbury "to keep costs down", Mr De Min is readying himself for take-off, with a clear aim of seeing Velapp become part of our everyday lives.

"The absolute dream would be to have the technology integrated as standard when people open the camera on their phones," he said.

"We are some time away from that but in this industry things move pretty quickly, so who knows?"

Mr De Min is also launching a competition, with a prize of £200 in cash, a Velapp t-shirt and the option of mentoring and support from a renowned business advisor in the UK.

To enter, simply download Velapp, use it and upload your best Velapp video to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter with the hash tags #Velapp and #Kent – and like the Velapp Facebook page.





Grammar head quits amid fury

AN INTERIM head teacher for one of the county's top grammar schools is set to be confirmed in the coming days, following a dramatic week which saw the previous incumbent resign following the outcome of a report into a botched attempt to become an academy and allegations of bullying.

Jane Robinson ended a nine-year stint as head of Canterbury's Simon Langton Girls' Grammar (SLGGS) on Monday - just days after claims senior figures at Kent County Council informed parents that disciplinary proceedings against her were set to begin.

Amid allegations of a last-gasp deal hammered out last Sunday, which saw her walk away and any disciplinary apparently shelved, an announcement was made she had quit.

Mrs Robinson has been under intense pressure since an aborted attempt last year to create what is known as a multi-academy trust (MAT). It would have seen the school then take struggling nearby non-selective, Spires Academy in Sturry, under its wing.

However, amid some serious allegations over the handling of the process, it collapsed.

The issue then shone a light on alleged bullying within the grammar school which had seen some members of staff forced to leave.

By Chris Britcher
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Following major changes within the school's governing body, it instigated an independent investigation headed by England's former chief schools adjudicator Professor Ian Craig. But the findings of what is known as the Craig Report have been kept a closely guarded secret - infuriating parents and staff who insist "the truth needs to come out".

Kent County Council and its two key figures involved in the dispute - Keith Abbott, director of education planning and access, and corporate director of education Patrick Leeson - refused to comment on the specific claims this week when pushed by KoS, instead only issuing a statement to confirm Mrs Robinson's departure.

Mr Abbott said: "The independent investigation into complaints received from parents, staff and students by KCC and SLGGS has concluded. Following his review of the findings the chair of governors considers that a number of actions should be put in place and the lessons learnt from the investigation report will aid the school in moving forward after the events of the past year. KCC will continue to work closely with the governing body to aid this process.

"In addition KCC is working with the governing body to support them in the recruitment process for a new headteacher following the resignation of Jane Robinson."



GONE: Jane Robinson resigned on Monday after a ''secret deal'' was struck

That announcement is expected "within days" according to sources.

In her departure statement, Mrs Robinson, who officially leaves on April 30, said: "I have been under a great deal of pressure over the course of the past year with the ongoing public challenges to my professionalism and this has taken its toll on my personal health and wellbeing.

"I have spent some amazing years here at Langton Girls' and thoroughly enjoyed working with some incredibly hard-working staff and students who I know will continue to go from strength to strength."

Parent Richard Davis, who has been vocal in his concerns about Mrs Robinson, told KoS this week: "It's a disgrace. It's an enormous cover-up.

"On Friday, Keith Abbott confirmed to myself and other parents a disciplinary was under way. Then on Monday it is announced she is resigning; walking away with no further investigation and the disciplinary proceedings terminated - in exchange for the suppression of the Craig Report."

He claims a "secret deal" was agreed between Mrs Robinson, Patrick Leeson and head of governers Alisdair Chisholm.

One former teacher, who we have agreed not to name, but lodged a grievance over Mrs Robinson's behaviour to staff, said: "I am appalled that the findings of the report are to be buried whilst Mrs Robinson is allowed to walk away with her 'reputation' intact and her pension rights secure. The whole affair reeks of hypocrisy; yes, we will listen to your allegations of bullying but, unlike the students we teach, as adults we have no right to see the bully dealt with.

"The findings of the Craig inquiry have to be published."



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HERO: John Surtees in his racing hey-day, left, and in later years, right. He remained a prominant figure in the motorsport world and many are mourning his loss

Gone but not forgotten, stars pay tribute to legendary Surtees

The only man to have won world titles on two and four wheels left a lasting mark on sport he loved

TRIBUTES continued to flood in this week for John Surtees - the motorsport legend who died last Friday. He was 83.

The star was best known for winning world titles on both two and four wheels - winning the Formula One title in 1964 with Ferrari after securing a string of 500cc motorcycling crowns.

It is an achievement which remains alone in motorsport history and one which many consider unlikely to ever be replicated.

But his influence on the sport he loved stretched much further from his days as a racer. An active figure, he was a regular at Kent's Brands Hatch circuit in West Kingsdown - both involved in various teams and events or simply as a fan.

And in 2015 he snapped up Buckmore Park karting circuit in Chatham in order to allow it to continue to develop the next generation of drivers. Traditionally a learning ground for future champions such as Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button, Surtees was aware of its value in developing talent.

Although he lived in Surrey, he was synonymous with Edenbridge, where he had worked for decades with his research and development and manufacturing base.

He died on Friday afternoon surrounded by his wife Jane and daughters Leonora and Edwina.

He had been admitted to St George's Hospital in London in February with an existing respiratory condition. After a short period spent in intensive care he passed away peacefully.

In a statement, his family said: "John was a loving husband, father, brother and friend. He was also one of the true greats of motorsport and continued to work tirelessly up until recently with The Henry Surtees Foundation and Buckmore Park kart circuit.

"We deeply mourn the loss of such an incredible, kind and loving man as well as celebrate his amazing life. He has set a very real example of someone who kept pushing himself at his peak and one who continued fighting until the very end.

"We would like to thank all the staff at St George's Hospital and The East Surrey Hospital for their professionalism and support during this difficult time for us."

Funeral details are to be announced in due course.

Murray Walker, the BBC's longtime commentator said: "It's an absolute hammer blow for me and British motorsport in general.

"I have been privileged to commentate on him and to know him as a friend and he's undoubtedly one of the greatest people who's ever lived in the history of motorsport."

Surtees started over 100 F1 grands prix, winning six, in a career which took him to Ferrari, Cooper and Honda, as well as starting a team which bore his name.

In 2009 his son Henry was killed while competing in a Formula Two race at Brands Hatch, aged 18, when he was struck on the head by a wheel which had become detached from another car.

Chatham MP and sports minister Tracey Crouch said: "John Surtees was a motorsport legend whose remarkable success on both the motorbike and in F1 may never be matched.

"He was a brilliant example of what you can achieve if you put your mind to something and step out of your comfort zone. His achievements both on the racing track and off it, with his tireless work for charity, were incredible and I pass on my condolences to his family and friends. He will be sorely missed."

Surtees won the F1 title with Ferrari in 1964 to add to his 500cc motorcycle world titles from 1956, 1958, 1959 and 1960.

During a motorcycle career which saw him race for Norton and MV Augusta, he also became the first man to win the Senior TT on the Isle of Man three years in succession.

Ferrari posted a black and white picture of Surtees posing next to team founder Enzo Ferrari on Twitter, with the message: "John Surtees, Motorsport legend and 1964 World Champion with Ferrari, passed away. Our thoughts are with his family."

Damon Hill, the 1996 F1 champion, tweeted "Such a lovely man. We have lost a true great motorsport legend. RIP John", and there was also a message on the official MotoGP account which read: "Very sorry to hear that John Surtees, the only person to win both MotoGP and F1 world championships, has passed away at the age of 83."

Born in Tatsfield, Surrey on February 11, 1934, Surtees was the son of a motorcycle dealer and it would be on two wheels where he would rise to fame.

While Surtees had a keen interest in engineering, his real talent was in the saddle and his outstanding record spoke for itself. In all he won seven motorcycling world titles in the 1950s, starting 49 grands prix and winning 38 of them.

His world-beating reputation on two wheels soon made him much sought-after on four, and a seemingly slick transition to the world of Formula One would follow.

After he was approached by Colin Chapman - the famous British car designer - he made his grand prix debut for Lotus at Monaco in 1960 before signing for Cooper in 1961 and then Lola a year later.

But it would be with Ferrari, who Surtees joined in 1963, where the Englishman would win the first of his six grands prix - and the Formula One championship too.

His pure grit, bravery and talent won over the Italian fans and Enzo Ferrari, the founder of the Scuderia. Surtees was heralded as

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

the team's saviour.

They affectionately called him "Son of the Wind" and "John the Great". He was also known as "Big John".

And after he beat countryman Graham Hill to the 1964 championship by just one point at the season-ending race in Monaco, it was expected to be the start of a glorious relationship with the 'Prancing Horse'.

But Surtees, who was known to have a tempestuous side, fell out with Ferrari, and dramatically turned his back on the Italian constructor midway through the 1966 campaign.

Surtees promptly joined Cooper and used all of his brilliance to finish runner-up that season, but it would be the closest he would get to clinching a second world title.

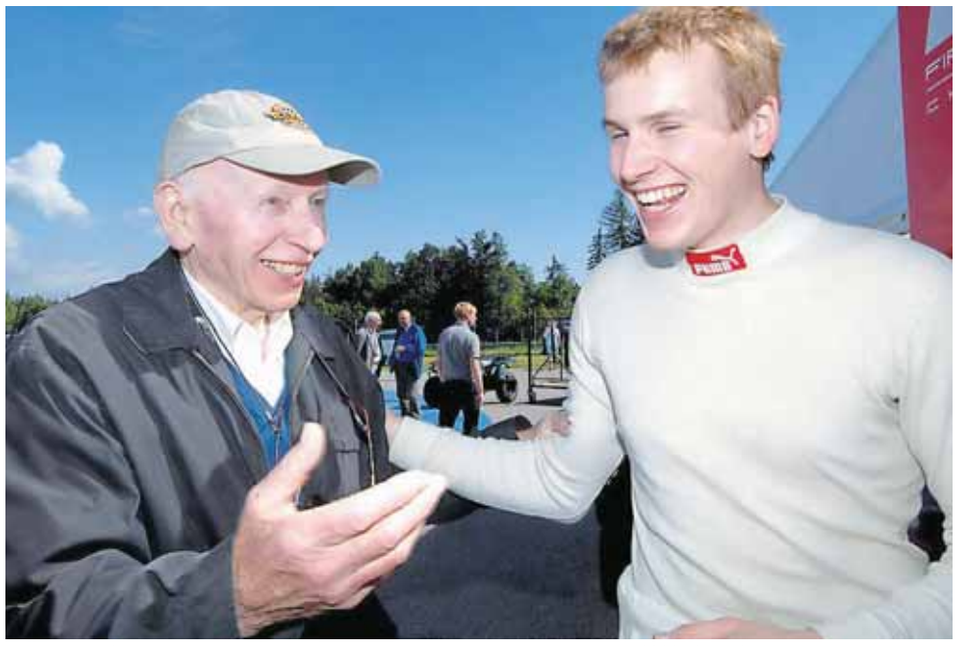
He won just one more race in the following campaign, before establishing and racing for his own constructor, Team Surtees in 1970, and retiring from competitive motorsport altogether two years later.

For a while in the 1970s he ran a motorcycle show in West Wickham and a Honda car dealership in Edenbridge.

But he never left the motorsport industry which he so adored.

In 1996, he was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme - the governing body for motorcycling - honoured him a Grand Prix 'legend' in 2003.

When the A1 Grand Prix - an innovative single-seater contest which launched at Brands Hatch and saw teams bear the colours of nations rather than teams - Surtees was chairman of Team Great Britain from 2005 to 2007.





STAR: John Surtees with his late son Henry, above. He was tragically killed in 2009 after a freak accident during a race at Brands Hatch.

The final years of Surtees' life will be remembered for his tireless charity work after he suffered his own personal tragedy in 2009.

His son Henry, who was tipped as one of the country's best emerging motor racing talents, was struck on the helmet by an errant tyre from a crash ahead of him while competing in the Formula Two series at Brands Hatch.

The blow left Henry immediately unconscious before he careered head-on into a barrier - his right foot still planted on the accelerator.

Although he was extracted from his car, and efforts were made to stabilise his condition, the 18-year-old succumbed to the head injuries and he was pronounced dead at hospital later that day.

"My initial thoughts were to walk away from motorsport," Surtees said in an interview in 2013.

"I just wanted to close my eyes. I couldn't stomach it, but I then thought about all those years I have spent in motorsport and seen people come and go.

"Yes it was a motoring environment that Henry died in, but it was something he loved doing and there had been a number of mistakes, not by Henry, which led to him getting killed. I took all of that into consideration and I thought 'I can't just walk away, I'll stay working with him'."

Surtees established the Henry Surtees Foundation in memory of his son which, since its inception in 2009, has provided vital support for those who have suffered injuries in accidents.

Relentless in its fundraising efforts, it has raised funds for air ambulances - including more than £75,000 for Kent's helicopter service.

Surtees was awarded an OBE in 2008 and a CBE in the 2016 New Years' Honours List. Fans had, for many years, hoped he would receive a knighthood for his services to the sport, but it was not to be.

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Help spa town's Monopoly picks

Tunbridge Wells has become the latest to get its very own dedicated version of the board game classic and it will be in the shops for Christmas. Now you can nominate just what will appear on its spaces

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

TUNBRIDGE Wells is to get its very own version of board game classic Monopoly - and now promoters of the game are appealing for your help on which famous local landmark should appear where on the board.

What's more, you can even vote for Kent on Sunday to appear on it too.

Among those venues vying to get the top slots will be the likes of the Pantiles, the Trinity Theatre, shopping centre Royal Victoria Place, King Charles The Martyr Church and the town's famous spa, which could land on the famous Water Works spot on the board.

It won a contest out of the UK's 'royal' towns to be the focus of the game, beating off the likes of Leamington Spa, which came second, and Windsor in third.

The company Winning Moves UK has an official licence from Monopoly manufacturers Hasbro to create the game - following in the footsteps of other specially created games for towns and cities across the UK - among them Canterbury.

It officially unveiled the board's launch at the Trinity Theatre on Wednesday and confirmed it hopes the game will be in the shops and available to buy in good time to capture the Christmas market.

Among those confirming the game was 'passing Go' were Robert Osborne, custom games manager from Winning Moves UK and the town's mayor, David Neve.

Mr Osborne explained: "We expect to be absolutely spoilt for choices on which Tunbridge Wells landmarks will star and feature in this game. It's an opportunity to showcase the great and the very good of one of Britain's most historic towns. But absolutely everything is up for grabs."

The public can now nominate the landmarks to replace the traditional likes of the Old Kent Road, Pall Mall and Mayfair on the special trading board game version - as well as those on Chance and Community Chest.

Adds Mr Osborne: "The game will see around 30 leading Royal Tunbridge Wells landmarks replacing the famous Monopoly addresses.

"We are inviting the public to help us put this special edition together by sending in votes and suggestions. The game will be themed in sets so, for example, a shopping centre could appear on Oxford Street, a paper on the Fleet Street location, the Town Hall on Whitehall, a theatre such as Trinity in the 'West End' section such as Leicester Square and an art gallery on trendy Angel, Islington.

"But we want to hear from the public – that are both serious and fun suggestions. For example, as very many of the Chance and Community Chest cards will be Tunbridge Wells themed, one could maybe send players back three spaces for getting stuck in Tunbridge Wells' notorious traffic bottlenecks. Or another send players to Tonbridge instead of the jail.

"The game will go into production to be ready in time for this Christmas and will hit shop shelves this October."



PLANNED: It should be in the shops this October in time for the Christmas rush. But just what appears where in this special version of the game is being left up to the public to decide.

Votes and suggestions should be sent to to: rtw@winningmoves.co.uk or by traditional post to: Monopoly Royal Tunbridge Wells Edition, Winning Moves UK, 7 Praed Street, London W2 1NP. Polls close at 11.59pm on March 31.

And don't forget to nominate Kent on Sunday while you're at it.

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Photo taken from roof garden at The Panorama

Auditions for hit show fail to have X factor as few attend

We meet those lined up in Margate as they take first step on ladder to TV glory







BID: Hercules Smith, left, and last year's X Factor judges, right

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

IT'S a long way from Margate to Wembley...but for those following their dream to win one of TV's most celebrated talent shows, that distant was magnified this week.

Not for the first time, the very earliest stage of audition for ITV's the X Factor took place in Dreamland on Monday. And when the doors opened at 11am there were the grand total of three people in line, even fewer than the 25 who turned up to the previous day's Maidstone auditions at Pizza Express Live.

But they were all alive with the dream that, in a few short months, they could be on stage in front of a sell-out Wembley Arena being crowned the winner and handed a record contract under the watchful gaze of music mogul Simon Cowell.

James Harty, head of creative operations at Dreamland, certainly wasn't disheartened.

He said: "Last year we had a few people who auditioned here go through to the next round. We're expecting similar crowds today - last year they turned up in waves, or drips and drabs and built up throughout the day.

"It is great to have X Factor here though. Our goal is to become an incredible entertainment venue and to have X Factor here is a great opportunity for us. It would be amazing for someone from Thanet to walk in here and then win the competition. There's so much home grown talent in Kent."

At this early stage there was little of the glitz and glamour of a show which in December pulled in more than seven million viewers to watch Bromley's Matt Terry win the viewer's vote.

Firstly, the panel of celebrity judges were no where to be seen. Instead it was a small team of X Factor production staff tasked with sorting the wheat from the proverbial chaff.

There were, however, some familiar faces in the form of previous audition hopeful Phillip Hadlow and Hercules Smith who made the TV auditions of BBC talent contest Let It Shine, in which contestants seek a role in an upcoming musical based on the music of Take That.

Mr Smith, 34, from Canterbury, managed to get through to the fifth week of audtions, dazzling judges, including Gary Barlow, with his blend of operatic vocals and pop.

Contestants were placed into five-piece bands, with Mr Smith being in Nightfall, and continued through the process as a collective.

But being unsuccessful in his mission to find singing fame on the stage, Mr Smith decided now was time to audition for X Factor.

He said: "I was fortunate enough to get as far as I did on Let It Shine, but I didn't really suit the show. I'm more of an operatic classical singer, and I suppose my age played a part in that too. But they gave me a chance and I sung my heart out.

"I think Let It Shine was my stepping stone but I don't think it was the right competition for me. Looking at the X Factor, Sara Aalto who was on it, had a big voice which is similar to mine, and I also think I can sing a lot of genres. I hope it's better for me."

Last time Margate's Phillip Hadlow, 47, was at this stage he made it through to face the four judges, only for his dreams to collapse in a chorus of 'no' from the panel.

He's now hoping this year will prove third time lucky.

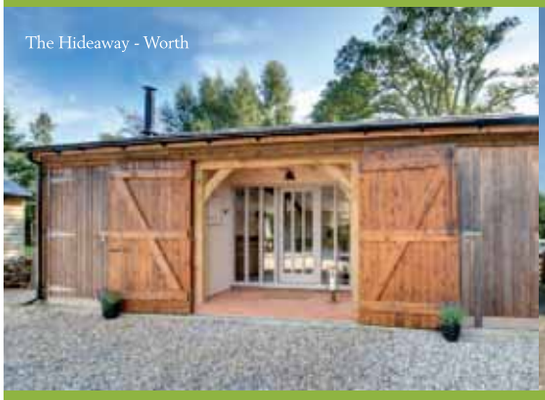
This time he sang a self-penned ballad depicting his previous experiences auditioning.

"Auditioning in front of the judges and the cameras last year was different than I thought it was going to be," he told KoS. "I thought I was going to be nervous but it was quite surreal, and I just gave it my best shot, which obviously wasn't very good.

"Each time I've put in for the show I've done a bit better, so I'm hoping to do even better this time. If I get one yes from Simon and the gang, I shall die a happy man."

Mr Hadlow also managed to bag

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HOPEFUL: Phillip Hadlow - dreaming of getting before the judges again

himself a seat as a temporary judge last year, after telling Simon Cowell that being on the panel was his back-up career plan.

"I was just about to leave, and they said seeing as I'd said I'd like to be considered for the position of judge, I can have a go at judging," he explains. "I'd told the producers before that I think I've got the X factor but that if the opportunity came up and my singing career went pear shaped then maybe I could be a judge as a back-up career or safety net."

The X Factor is at something of a crossroads. Having dominated weekend schedules and the charts for years, recent series have seen viewing figures take a big dip and seen BBC rival Strictly Come Dancing comfortably win the rating's war.

In addition, Matt Terry's winning single peaked at number three rather than claiming the regular number one slot.

Now speculation is rife that Simon Cowell is set for a major overhaul of the show in a bid to recapture the imagination.

Among those ideas being touted is that X Factor follows in the footsteps of its sister show, Britain's Got Talent, and has a week of live shows before the final over the weekend - rather than the existing lengthy process in the months leading up to Christmas.

So for those at the very bottom rung of the ladder, just what was the process at Dreamland like?

Explains Mr Hadlow: "The last two times I've auditioned I've found out on the day whether or not I'm through to the next stage of the competition.

"There's actually two auditions in front of the show's producers before you get to be perform for the celebrity judges. The producers do make you feel at ease though - I think the camera man this time recognised me from last time because he pulled a funny face when I walked in.

"I've just auditioned and I don't know yet if I'm through. They've just given me this piece of paper telling me I'll be emailed and told."

Auditionees, though few of them, will have a lengthy wait - until July 17 - to find out whether they're through to the next stage.

Mr Hadlow added: "I really hope I get to audition again. Last year I went to the London open auditions and there were so many people there. I started queuing at 8am but didn't get to audition until 2.45pm. And then when I got through I had to go to my second audition at the Emirates Stadium with other people who had also gotten through the first round.

"It's interesting how it's different now. I wonder if I'll have to audition for producers again this time if I get through or if I'll just go straight in front of Simon and the others. I just don't know."

You can watch a video of Mr Hadlow performing his rejection ballad via kentnews.co.uk.

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FUTURE: Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding will replace Mel and Sue as hosts of the show

Bay's Sandi to host Bake Off

Sandi Toksvig will join Canterbury baker Paul Hollywood in the Channel 4 version of hit show

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

PAUL Hollywood will be joined by another Kent resident on the next series of the Great British Bake Off, after it was confirmed that Herne Bay's Sandi Toksvig is to be co-presenter.

She will join Noel Fielding in replacing the former duo of Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins.

They both ditched the show after it was snapped up by Channel 4 and moved from its traditional home on BBC1. Judge Mary Berry also left at the same time with only baker Mr Hollywood, who lives near Canterbury, remaining from the original cast.

But after months of speculation, Channel 4 this week confirmed the new line up, which will also see Prue Leith replace Mary Berry.

Ms Toksvig, who replaced Stephen Fry as host of QI, said she was honoured to be part of "this national treasure of a show".

She added: "Noel Fielding is one of the nicest guys in show business. The first time I met him I felt like I had met a rather wayward cousin whose take on the world made me laugh. The only down side is that he has much better dress sense than I do."

The star, who shot to fame in the 1980s presenting children's ITV Saturday morning show No 73 - filmed for the most part at what were then TVS' studios in Maidstone - has since gone on to become a TV and radio regular.

She was a long-time host of BBC Radio 4's The News Quiz and two years ago hosted a special edition of QI at the University of Kent. She has a seafront home in Herne Bay, in addition to a home in London.



PAST: The old gang of Bake Off from its original BBC days. All but Paul Hollywood have since quit

Paul Hollywood, who will return as a judge, said he "could not be more delighted" about the show's newcomers.

He said: "Prue is a hugely respected culinary legend and Sandi and Noel are warm and utterly hilarious. I cannot wait to get back in the tent with the bakers."

Mrs Leith, who formerly appeared as a judge on the BBC's Great British Menu, said: "I am just so thrilled to be joining Paul, Sandi and Noel on the biggest show on TV and I cannot wait to see what the real stars of the show - the bakers - are going to create for us.

"It is such an honour to be part of The Great British Bake Off team."

Jay Hunt, Channel 4's chief creative officer, said the baking show will air this autumn and described the line-up as "innovative".

The Great British Bake Off has been the most watched show in recently years, pulling in millions of devoted viewers.

But as the contract to broadcast the show came up for renewal, Channel 4 last year pulled off one of the most audacious moves in television history - paying £25million a year to producers Love Productions to take the show from the BBC.

The line-up proved a topic of major discussion on Friday with many fans split over just how the show will shape-up with the new presenters and judge.

Former contestant Selasi Gbormittah hailed the decision to cast "funny" Noel Fielding as the show's new presenter.

He said the quirky comedian will make an ideal addition to the tent to calm the nerves of contestants.

Speaking on breakfast TV on Friday, he said: "Noel Fielding is very funny and it's what new bakers need in the tent."

"I'm very excited about it," he continued, adding that Mr Fielding and co-host Ms Toksvig, would "ace" the job.



Mansion's year-round repair unit

We take a trip to Knole House in Sevenoaks to see the on-going multi-million pound renovation work being conducted by the National Trust and the unveiling of a special conservation unit in its grounds

By Emily King
Emily.King@archant.co.uk

WORK on the on-going conservation and restoration of one of the county's finest stately homes continued this week with the opening of a two-storey conservation studio on the site.

Created in what was a medieval barn on the Knole Park estate, it forms a key part of Knole House's £19.8 million rejuvenation project - funded in part by £7.75m from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Now the National Trust-owned property in Sevenoaks has its own permanent space for the conservation of everything from furniture to artwork and will be open all year round.

Launched this week, it also saw the opening of four new showrooms in the house for visitors following the completion of the first phases of restoration work.

Speaking to KoS this week, Dame Helen Ghosh, the National Trust's director general, said: "This is really exciting for us and marks the beginning of being able to open new spaces within this vast property so we can properly tell the story of its occupants and collection."

The largest project in the trust's history, the first phase included the installation of controlled heating systems to protect the collections, along with bespoke lighting to transform the gloomy rooms.

It has faced a running battle with leaking roofs and windows, damp, moths, and woodworm which have all put the collection of furniture, paintings and textiles the house homes at risk.

Adds Dame Helen: "The work that's been done here is incredible, and the staff have really had to battle with philosphy - making sure they get the lighting or heating right but also making sure they keep the 17th century style and history the building has."

A popular tourist draw, the project is designed to rescue the country house from centuries of decay and to upgrade, repair and represent rooms and spaces never seen before.

General manager at Knole House, Hannah Kay, said: "This is the biggest building project that Knole has witnessed in the last 400 years. it is an enormous challenge and we are thrilled that we can now share the story of this fascinating house with our visitors and supporters.





PROTECTED: Knole House, left, and one of its magnificent rooms, above.

"The conservation studio will allow us not only to care for our own collections but to take in work from other houses in the future and offer work-based training which will make Knole a national centre for conservation excellence."

A permanent team of conservators will be based in the unit.

Knole House has a grand past. Originally a manor house, it became a residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1456 and successive holders of the position extended the house over the years.

By the time of the Tudors, it entered royal possession and would pay host to hunts from Henry VIII and a visit from Elizabeth I.

In 1604, Thomas Sackville - a relative of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII - and a prominent figure, took over the house for the Sackville family.

The family still live in part of the house, having spent over 400 years rebuilding and furnishing Knole through the generations before the National Trust took over ownership in 1946. It has a deal with the Sackville family for them to remain living on the site for the next 150 years.

Knole's historic collection includes many pieces of rare Stuart furniture, some acquired from royal palaces by Charles Sackville, sixth Earl of Dorset when he was Lord Chamberlain in the 17th century.

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BIGGER: Organisers boast that this year's festival will be better than ever, and includes selection of events which aren't just music acts...

LeeFest give out free tickets to locals with TN8 postcode

This year's headliners include Annie Mac and Jake Bugg as well as local bands

MORE than 10 years after its humble beginnings in a Beckenham backgarden, LeeFest is back with a bang this year, and is offering locals the chance to grab free tickets, which are on sale now.

Free tickets will be available for residents who live within a postcode radius. Local residents just beyond the postcode area will also receive a hefty 50 per cent discount on tickets.

This year's festival welcomes a diverse mix of chart topping names and acts including folk-royalty Jake Bugg, dance music's most supreme selector BBC Radio 1 DJ Annie Mac and special guests Wild Beasts.

A selection of the finest up and coming acts also completed the first announcement, including BBC Sound of 2017's Tom Greenan, Zane Lowe approved Fickle Friends, and Bad Sounds, who were recently crowned hottest record in the world by Annie Mac.

The hotly tipped Ider, Strong Asian Mothers, Fish, Keston Cobblers Club, and Catholic Action are amongst many more need-to-know names on the lineup, with even more to be announced, including the festival's final headliner.

As well as a selection of talent from around the UK, The Neverland is also set to welcome up and coming local talent including infectious Kent rockers The Bay Rays and the newly formed indie trio Weird + Co.

Music and arts institution The Tunbridge Wells Forum will host the Hooks Rock stage with a selection of talent from the surrounding areas, including Lady Bird, Operation Kino, Hunters Loaf and Tor will join the lineup, with more to be announced.

LeeFest and The Tunbridge Wells Forum will also join forces for an extra special warm up event, taking place at The Forum on June 9, to welcome local LeeFest goers to the wonderful world of The Neverland.

Headliner and full details to be announced soon.

Organisers behind the three-day festival boast: "Escaping the confines of the real world, the Neverland's kingdom also offers an extensive selection of shape-shifting dance troupes, glitter fuelled games, real beach parties, tranquillity spa, comedy, arts and craft workshops, cinema and more wonders to be announced."

LeeFest dates back to 2006, when founder Lee Denny, from Beckenham, started the festival with just seven bands playing. 150 people attended and all money raised was donated to Teenager Cancer Trust.

Mr Denny was rewarded with the Spirit of London Awards 'Achievement in The Arts' prize in December 2012 for his creation of LeeFest.

In the same year he was also placed in Time Out UK 2012: 100 Culture List in the UK's Time Out magazine, quoting him as one of the inspiring 100 people in the UK who have made others lives better.

During the festival's 10th anniversary last year, it moved to a bigger Tunbridge Wells site - John Darlings Farm.

For more information on postcodes which apply visit, www.event.bookitbee.com/11056/leefest-presents-the-neverland-2017-locals-offer.

Tickets for the festival, which runs from August 10 to 12, are available now from £99 at www.leefest.org/home.

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Women Seeking

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MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

HELLO Gents, I'm a mature attractive interesting lady, with gorgeous eyes. I'm smart, sophisticated, love theatre and films. Give me a call or text me. Looks unimportant, must be kind. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424331**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

CARLY, 34yrs, attractive and discreet military wife seeks no strings fun with respectable gent. **Tel: 0906 515 3038 Box 424419**



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ATTRACTIVE well educated lady, mid 30's, solvent, professional, seeks discreet broad minded gent. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 425891**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**



CORRINE, genuine advertiser seeking adult fun, no time wasters pls. I will respond to all msgs. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4035196**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425933**

PHILIPPA, feminine open minded lady seeking adult fun, genuine responses only pls, no time-wasters. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4030610**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

LIVELY 53-year-old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5763284**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

ANGELA, 53, African origin, looking for a kind, genuine, caring gentleman, 60 years +. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421039**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

SINGLE lady, 65, blonde, quiet nature, likes the outdoors, picnics, jiving, WLTM single gentleman for companionship and possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423411**

Men Seeking

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JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469**

CALLING all ladies 40+ who would like to be wined, dined and romanced by attractive gent, 54 years please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425943**

JOHN, mid sixties widower, cultured and interesting, solvent with own home. WLTM lady 55+ for genuine companionship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425939**

GENUINE single gent, 55yrs, seeks friendship hopefully leading to true love with lady 35-55, looks unimportant. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425937**

SOLVENT gentleman, young 70s, loves life seeking a lady of any age to spoil and pamper, take on holidays, wine and dine. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425935**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**



RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**



COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service ***FREE*** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

ROBBIE, 54, reasonably fit, bi-curious, I'm very inexperienced and would like to meet a CD or TV preferably but not essential for a bit of fun. Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421357**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4748240**

SEEKING ladies for good company, socialising and a bit of fun, BBW local to Kent, get in touch and lets start having fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413623**

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Happy Mondays celebrate 30 years with greatest hits tour

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk



PARTY: This is the fifth time the band have regrouped to play a series of concerts

MANCHESTER'S legendary alternative rock band, Happy Mondays, have announced a twenty-five date tour, which they're bringing to Folkestone.

Tickets for their Folkestone concert went on sale on Friday, March 17.

The Twenty Four Hour Party People – Greatest Hits Tour announcement comes on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Happy Mondays' debut album Squirrel and G-Man Twenty Four Hour Party People Plastic Face Carnt Smile (White Out).

The seven-piece band promise to play a selection of their biggest hits including Wrote For Luck, Hallelujah, and God's Cop, and have stuck to their original line-up of Shaun Ryder as frontman, his brother Paul Ryder on bass, Gary Whelan on drums, Rowetta as female vocalist, Mark Day on guitar, Paul Davis on keyboards and dancer Mark 'Bez' Berry.

Happy Mondays frontman Mr Ryder said: "I am really looking forward to the Mondays shows leading up to Christmas 2017. We're performing better than ever and I love getting together with the band, blasting out all our great tunes we've made together over the decades. It's gonna be great."

Bez, the group's dancer and percussionist, added: "Just as I thought it was all over, the party's starting again. Look forward to seeing you all."

The band last performed in Kent when they headlined Electric Gardens 2007 at Mount Ephraim Gardens in Faversham.

They headlined the Sunday night of the festval which saw 14,000 people attend to view 50 artists across four stages.

Though the band split-up in 1993, they have performed a number of times throughout the decades following, and will experience their fifth incarnation when they go on tour in the run up to Christmas.

The last time they rebanded they played the Isle of Wight Festival.

The Twenty Four Hour Party People tour is coming to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall Theatre on November 22.

For tickets visit atgtickets.com/Folkestone or call the box office on 0844 871 3015

Bowie's Record Store Day



TWO limited-edition David Bowie live albums - Cracked Actor, and Bowpromo - are to be released to the public to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Record Store Day on April 22.

Reggae festival confirmed

THE ONE LOVE FESTIVAL celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2017 and will be staged at Colebrook Lakes in Tunbridge Wells from September 1-3.

It had previously held its 2012 event at the Hop Farm in Paddock Wood but pulled out after one year citing a number of problems.

Space join Dartford Fest



90'S POP BAND Space will join X Factor winner Matt Terry on stage at this year's Dartford Festival on July 15 and 16.

For updates on the free festival visit dartford.gov.uk/festival

Marlowe wins panto award

DICK WHITTINGTON at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre was named Pantomime of the Year 2016/17 (750-1500 seats) at the GB Pantomime Awards.

The pantomime which starred TV presenter Stephen Mulhern, was co-produced by the Canterbury venue and Evolution Productions.



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Darlings sing 1940s hits



THE D-DAY DARLINGS present Songs That Won The War at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on April 1.

For tickets visit churchilltheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 020 3285 6000.

Pernice dance masterclass

BUDDING Gravesend dancers are being given the chance to take part in masterclasses delivered by Strictly Come Dancing star Giovanni Pernice when his show Il Ballo è Vita comes to The Woodville Theatre on July 5. Dance schools must buy 25 tickets to qualify, go to woodville.seatlive.com for more information.

Noel and Gertie's show



A MUSICAL comedy about the friendship of playwright Noel Coward and actress Gertie, is making it's way to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on March 28.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

A day out to rave about

DREAMLAND Margate has been chosen to host the Big Fish Little Fish x Camp Bestival tour on April 8.

The day brings a family party and this year's theme is pop stars and rock stars, featuring jungle and drum and bass legend DJ Aphrodite.

For tickets visit dreamland.co.uk

Wildlife expert reveals scariest encounters

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk



CHILDREN'S TV presenter Naomi Wilkinson is embarking on a tour where she'll recall some of her most exciting and adrenaline-boosting wildlife experiences from the far flung corners of the world.

The wildlife expert will even introduce the audience to some fierce and frightening animals she has met along the way.

Ms Wilkinson is the presenter of CBBC's Naomi's Nightmares of Nature, in which she travels the world to come face-to-face with animals that initially seem weird, dangerous or downright scary.

She is also a regular presenter for BBC1's Countryfile and was honoured to be a judge for the 2015 Countryfile Photographic Competition.

Speaking to KoS, Ms Wilkinson says it's hard to choose a favourite animal she's encountered.

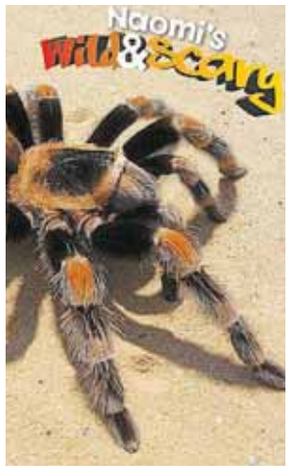
"Where to begin?" she questions. "I have been so lucky and had so many animal encounters, but I think one of my absolute favourites was swimming with wild atlantic spotted dolphins in the Bahamas. If a wild animal ever comes to hang out with you, with no food reward, then that is an enormous privilege."

Having visited some of the most extreme climates in the world, the TV presenter explains that some of her encounters have been scary too.

"During filming for the last series of Nightmares of Nature we went out on safari in South Africa, at night, to observe a pride of lions. Our jeep had open sides and the lions came a lot closer than I had anticipated. I really thought I was going to become a lion's dinner that evening," she laughed.

Speaking of her love for her job she says: "I love that no two days are the same. I get to travel to amazing places, meet incredible people and see things that I wouldn't ever have done on my own."

Wild and Scary will visit Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 9. For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk



FURRY: Tarantulas are one of the creatures in the show



HISSING: Cockroaches are another





Don't just rely on pot luck to save winter plants

Hannah Stephenson says her terracotta plants always face casualty during cold weather months...

EVERY YEAR I have a number of casualties among my terracotta pots, which end up broken or cracked in the depths of winter.

Replacing them can be an almost impossible decision, thanks to the plethora of garden pots available both from retailers and online, from huge Grecian-style glazed urns, to light resin contemporary planters.

If you're going to invest in new pots, make sure they match the outside of your property and the style of your garden. If you live in a centuries-old cottage featuring original brickwork, for example, you may want to steer clear of contemporary urban planters.

While some manufacturers claim their terracotta pots are frostproof or frost resistant, I would advise you take care of them anyway to minimise risk of flaking and cracking.

Glazed terracotta pots are generally more frostproof than unglazed ones, but if compost in the pot becomes waterlogged and then the water freezes, it will expand and crack the pot as well as killing the roots of your plants.

Move terracotta pots near to the house during the winter months or wrap them in bubble wrap or horticultural fleece to protect them - and make sure you have adequate drainage holes and drainage material in the pot, standing the pot on feet.

If you do need to refresh your garden pots, there are possibilities for all tastes:

DESIGNER PLANTER

Laura Ashley has branched out on to the garden scene with a new range of frostproof glazed terracotta pots in pastel blue, available in selected Wyevale Garden Centres and fully available across 108 stores from March 20, from £6.99-£34.99. For stockists, visit www.wyevalegarden-centres.co.uk

LIGHTING UP TIME

Soft lighting can create a great ambience in the garden - and you can highlight your plants with Dutch design company Elho's flower light which features a contemporary planter with the stylish solar light connected by a wooden frame. Available in white, anthracite and mint, Flower Light charges by natural sunlight. RRP £34.99. For stockists, visit www.elho.com

WATER-WISE STYLE

Lechuza has come out with another stylish contemporary planter, the Cubeto bowl planter, ideal for lower-growing plants, either for permanent or temporary planting. It's a smooth, bowl-shaped lower-to-the-ground pot made from lightweight plastic, but which looks a lot like stone and comes with a sub-irrigation system featuring a colour-coordinated liner, drain plug, water level indicator which reduces risk of over-watering and water supply shaft and which makes watering easy. Available in stone grey, sand beige or classic black. From £17.99, www.lechuza.co.uk



UNIQUE: An alternative, more durable plant pot

Ain't no party like it

S CLUB PARTY are set to headline this year's Gravesend Riverside Festival on July 22.

Jo, Bradley and Tina from the original line-up will be entertaining crowds with some of their top 10 hits including Never Had a Dream Come True, Reach, Bring it all Back and Don't Stop Movin.

For more information and tickets visit gravesham.gov.uk/riversidefestival.

Soul Fest by the sea

MARGATE SOUL FESTIVAL 2017 is set to present three days of over 50 DJs, four headliners across two stages and seven themed venues, on the first weekend in August.

Artists announced so far include hip hop trailblazers Arrested Development, soul and gospel legend Candi Staton, and Italian Latin, jazz, and Bossa Nova artist Gerardo Frisina.

Call 01843 292795 for ticket information.

Diary of Hounslow Girl

A BRITISH MUSLIM teenager faces a conflict of cultures in the return of this coming of age comedy set in the heart of Hounslow, coming to Folkestone's Quarterhouse on March 29.

The Diary of a Hounslow Girl negotiates the hurdles of conservative family values alongside the challenges of teenage life in west London.

Visit folkestonequarterhouse.co.uk

Arts festival for autistic

A FESTIVAL purely by and for people on the autism spectrum is coming to the University of Kent, Canterbury.

The School of Arts and Gulbenkian Theatre at the university present the Autism Arts Festival, which includes theatre, films, workshops, and panel discussions, and will take place on April 29 and 30.

For the full programme and booking information visit autismartsfestival.org.

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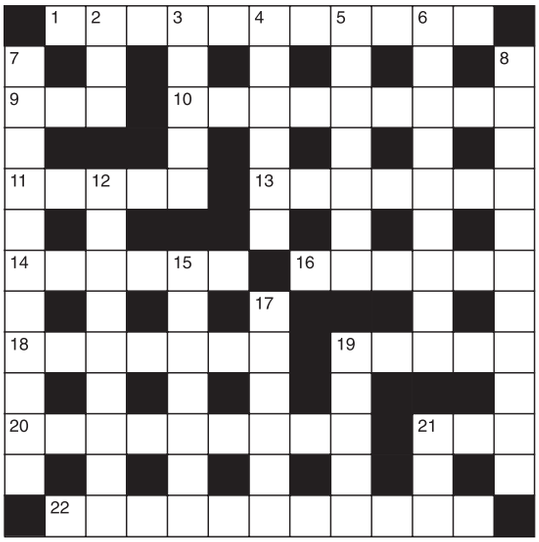
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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Spread (11)
9. Before (3)
10. Blacken (9)
11. Trivial (5)
13. Unity (7)
14. Zest (6)
16. Imprints (6)
18. Criterion (7)
19. Meeting place (5)
20. Silent (9)
21. Curve (3)
22. Journey's end (11)

Down

2. Wrath (3)
3. Unhappily (5)
4. Adviser (6)
5. Disregard (7)
6. Shopkeeper (9)
7. Disposition (11)
8. Tenacity (11)
12. Garrulous (9)
15. Learner (7)
17. Degrade (6)
19. Call (5)
21. In the past (3)

Cryptic

Across

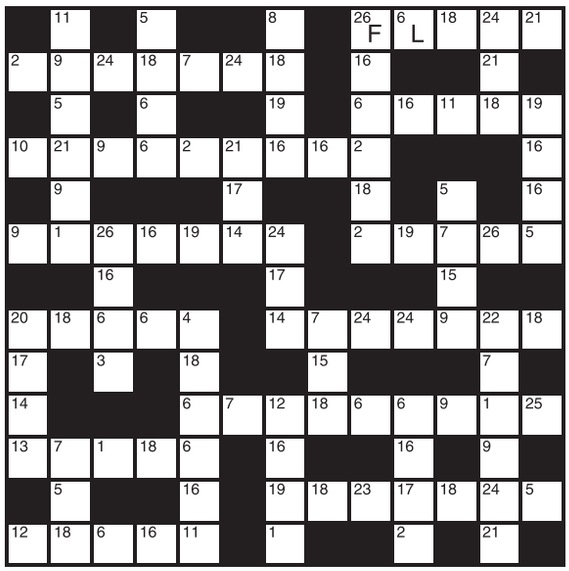
1. Take out painting that shows an imaginative quality (8,3)
9. Thus I return to Greek Island (3)
10. What the traveller pays for food in the restaurant car! (5,4)
11. Cause one to be permanently outclassed! (5)
13. Imparts knowledge in official documents (7)
14. Threefold excursion by the French (6)
16. Look quickly at the weapon after the end of the fighting (6)
18. About different clues he keeps to himself (7)
19. Doesn't manage to avoid hunting parties (5)
20. Very private arrangement for street cop (3,6)
21. A metal container (3)
22. Upon which the housewife pegs out! (11)

Down

2. Public transport is almost bankrupt! (3)
3. The whole lot to converse endlessly (5)
4. A musical direction that could make 'Aida' go wrong! (6)
5. Melodious fun with lute, in a way! (7)
6. Dispose differently back on the mountain chain (9)
7. Show one the way to speak for the board (11)
8. Making a change in the initial rating (11)
12. The chief guiding maxim, we hear (9)
15. Having the greatest volume (7)
17. Transport for somebody after final departure (6)
19. Doctor allowed to return to wayside accommodation (5)
21. Heavyweight not making a comeback (3)

CODEWORD

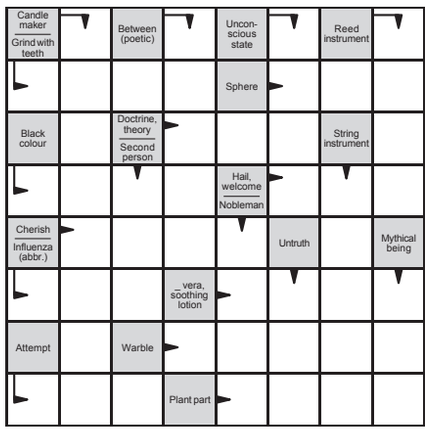
This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



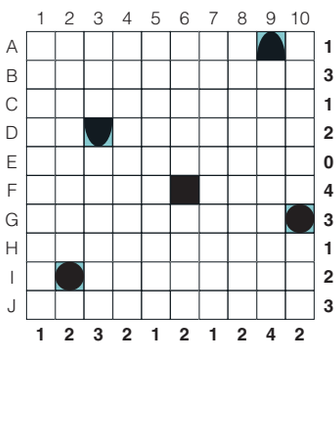
Arrowword



Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

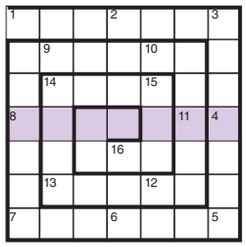
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.



THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Ride waves
2. Be unsuccessful
3. Lacking fat
4. Naming word
5. Midday
6. Anaesthetise
7. Jolt
8. Couple
9. Drizzle
10. Hitlerite
11. Flower
12. Condiment
13. Cedar, say
14. Nobleman
15. Lie hidden
16. Chesspiece

Keyword clue: A flightless bird

SUDOKU

Hard

6	5		2					
		4					3	
9			3					7
	6			9	2	1		
					5			8
		1	8	6			4	
7					3			6
	1					9		
					8		5	4

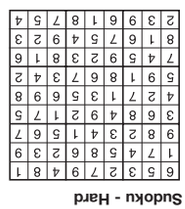
Easy

		7	5	1				3
	2				4	8	9	
3		4				5		
				9	8		4	5
9			7			1		6
5	1		3		6			
		6			3	7		9
	5	1	2				8	
4				7	1	6		

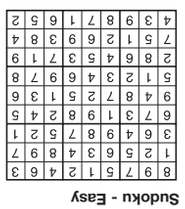
Solutions

Cryptic
8 Persistence; 12 Talkative; 15 Student; 17 Demean; 19 Visit; 21 Ago.
Codeword
1=N, 2=D, 3=K, 4=Y, 5=T, 6=L, 7=A, 8=Z, 9=I, 10=C, 11=W, 12=B, 13=P, 14=M, 15=X, 16=O, 17=U, 18=E, 19=R, 20=J, 21=H, 22=V, 23=Q, 24=S, 25=G, 26=F
Word Spiral
1 Surf; 2 Fail; 3 Lean; 4 Noun; 5 Noon; 6 Numb; 7 Bump; 8 Pair; 9 Rain; 10 Nazi; 11 Ins; 12 Salt; 13 Tree; 14 Ear; 15 Lurk; 16 King. **Keyword:** Penguin

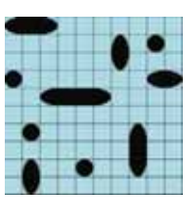
Double Crossword
Across: 1 Abstract art; 9 Ios; 10 Train fare; 11 Expel; 13 Informs; 14 Triple; 16 Glance; 18 Reduse; 19 Meets; 20 Top secret; 21 Tin; 22 Clothesline. Down: 2 Bus; 3 Total; 4 Adagio; 5 Tuneful; 6 Rearrange; 7 Directorate; 8 Reassessing; 12 Principal; 15 Loudest; 17 Hearse; 19 Motel; 21 Ton.
Quick
Across: 1 Dissemination; 9 Er; 10 Denigrate; 11 Petty; 13 Oneness; 14 Nolessess; 21 Arc; 22 Destination. Down: 2 Measure; 19 Venue; 20 Nellish; 16 Stamps; 18 Ire; 3 Sadly; 4 Mentor; 5 Neglect; 6 Tradesman; 7 Temperament;



Sudoku - Hard



Sudoku - Easy



Battleships



Arrowword

Walk your way around the Isles



Why not make the trip to the Scilly islands this month and enjoy Walk Scilly 2017, the popular walking festival with seven days of themed walks led by expert guides, taking place from 1 to 7 April?

Now in its 11th year, Walk Scilly has grown to offer 29 walks, more than ever before, including new walks and old favourites such as wildlife discovery tours, food foraging forays, top-to-toe rambles across all five inhabited islands, and a Mediterranean stroll through Tresco Abbey Garden.

New for this year is a rare visit to the tiny uninhabited island of Nornour led by local archaeologist Dr. Katharine Sawyer, as part of a boat trip around the Eastern Isles with seabirder and photographer Joe Pender.

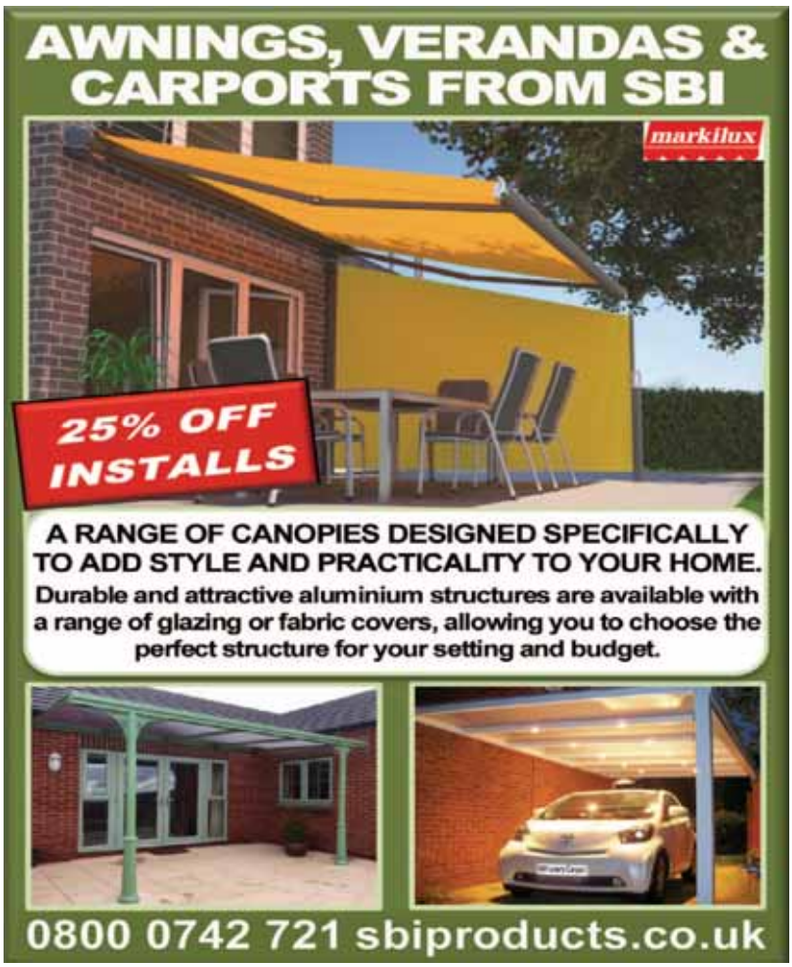
Katharine will be telling walkers of the island's long period of habitation during the Bronze and Iron Ages, and the hut circles uncovered in the early 1960s, revealing Roman finds, such as more than 300 brooches from the 1st to 3rd centuries, thought to be offerings of respect to a local cult.

There's another chance to unearth the history of two more of Scilly's uninhabited islands. Investigate post-medieval ruins, Bronze Age burial chambers and stone rows on Samson, uninhabited since the mid-1800s, and the two main archaeological sites on St. Helen's – the early medieval hermitage and 18th century Pest House, an isolation hospital for plague cases.

This year, you can also get spooked on a ghoulish ghost walk through Hugh Town up to the Star Castle hotel on St. Mary's, built during the reign of Elizabeth I. The walk ends at the hotel's Dungeon Bar, where 400 years ago some of the most notorious prisoners in the country were incarcerated.

Anyone sailing or flying to Scilly between 30 March and 10 April inclusive can take advantage of a 10 per cent travel discount with Isles of Scilly Travel. Phone the booking line on 01736 334220 and quote WLK17.Tickets are limited so book now! Phone 01720 424036 or e-mail events@visitislesofscilly.com.

■ visitislesofscilly.com/walkscilly





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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

20mph comes with side effects

I FEAR the new 20mph speed limit in Tunbridge Wells [KoS, last week] may have unintended consequences.

On a recent visit to the borough of Lewisham I found a blanket speed limit of 20mph on all except the trunk roads. Driving at this lower limit lead my concentration level to fall with the potential risk for an accident rising.

I was also tailgated by other, probably local, drivers who clearly wanted to go faster. Most interestingly, however, my diesel engined car was turning over at 1,800 rpm at 20mph. Back across the border into Bromley at 30mph the engine revs decreased to 1,500 rpm. The automatic gearbox is clearly optimised for a 30mph limit.

This may not sound much but multiply the marginal increase in fuel consumption by a few hundred cars each day and it becomes a more serious matter. The law of unintended consequence strikes again.

Martin Stoneham,
West Kingsdown

NHS will survive with Brit workers

I'M really sick of the fatuous statement continually bandied about that 'the NHS wouldn't run without all the foreign workers' [KoS, letters, last week].

The NHS, any company, business, bank, or whatever, 'wouldn't run' without the people in it, of whatever nationality, colour, sex, or religious persuasion, this argument is disingenuous, a non-starter.

What's more relevant, is why are we importing more workers while we pay 1.6 million people to sit on their backsides, plus other benefits and our national debt climbs to £2trillion? Why do we import thousands of skilled workers from countries where they are more urgently needed, while we close down technical departments in colleges?

As the Tory/Labour cartel continue with their liberal left policies, education is dumbed down, the appalling waste of billions continues and the gap between rich and poor becomes an unbridgeable chasm, the establishment's dependency on imported labour will grow, but the cost of the unemployed will pull us down.

Phil Granger,
West Malling

Ray, the problem is with energy

WELL, Ray Duff thinks he's taken my advice and stuck to one subject, but he hasn't: he essays, albeit smoothly, from over-population, through climate change and air-pollution - goodness me he does cover some ground, before taking in consumerism; labour conditions, and ending up in minimum wages and automation. And he claims that he's sticking to one subject!

On the matter of alternative green, energy, what does Mr Duff have up his sleeve when 'the sun don't shine' and 'the wind don't blow'?

India has vast coal reserves which she will continue to burn: she has tripled output since 1990 and this is set to increase exponentially. China burns 49 per cent of the world's total coal consumption and derives more than 70 per cent of its energy from coal; output has increased by 83 per cent in recent years. Neither is ready to abandon fossils any time soon. Their ventures into solar are mere toes in the water. They will stick with proven technology for their expanding and increasingly aspirational populations - both of which Mr Duff disapproves.

London's pollution was seriously exacerbated by all those wood burning stoves the green luvvies installed. This source of fuel produces three times the amount of CO2 as fossils, together with all-manner of noxious and toxic chemicals.

Mr Duff fails to understand the very basics of economics and the principles of a market economy. Products have and will continue to evolve at a faster rate because of the need for efficiencies of scale and manufacture; harking back to a rose-coloured Victorian Age is to condemn labour to the very conditions he rightly identifies as bad. And, finally, basic wages and minimum incomes are paid for, at the first point, by employers; this will drive them to innovate and invest further in automation to shed costs; ultimately, it's the consumer who pays, and it is the consumer who will drive the need for ever cheaper goods and services. On this subject, more than others, Mr Duff really does live in cloud-cuckoo-land.

Edward Baker,
Tunbridge Wells

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Duff logic assumes it is all down to humans

AS Ray Duff has returned once again to the subject of climate change [KoS, letters, 05.03] it would be instructive to consider the real questions which should be addressed. Is global warming happening at all, at least in the sense that it is an ongoing process, rather than a temporary fluctuation?

Contrary to the claims of the alarmists the jury is still out on this fundamental matter.

Secondly, if global warming is occurring, is it due to human agency, or could it be the result of forces completely out of our control, such as variations in the Sun's output in non visible radiation, or very long term effects of the Earth's orbit not being a perfect circle? Again we cannot be absolutely certain that humanity is to blame. Finally, if anthropological warming is the cause, how can we address it, without throwing the baby out with the bath water?

There seems little reason to oppose taking sensible steps to reduce the use of fossil fuels, providing they are measured, and do not undermine the basis of our technological civilisation, and this is where environmental fanatics refuse to listen to reason. We cannot just, as some claim, close down coal and gas plants before we have created working alternatives, and the wind turbines beloved of the Greens are quite incapable of providing a substitute, producing intermittent energy at best.

The answer must lie in science developing truly effective methods of generating energy such as fission and fusion power.

The overriding truth is that we cannot return our world to a pre industrial past without destroying the means of sustaining the vast majority of our populations, and those who reject this are as much enemies of humanity as are those who recklessly pollute the world.

Colin Bullen
Tonbridge

Run a stopping service to Calais

YOUR article about the MP warning of road chaos at Dover [KoS, last week] was an interesting read.

I have campaigned for years we should have a stopping service from St Pancras to Calais-Frethun and do all the customs and immigration checks there. At Calais passengers could transfer to the domestic part of the station - after customs and passport control - to board trains to other parts of Europe.

The main advantage of this would be persuading passengers to use the train rather than blocking up roads with their cars.

Jackie Davidson,
Sittingbourne

Why not open up the subway?

THE new Ashford college building on the junction of Station Road and Elwick Road is certainly a great opportunity for the town.

My only concern is the obvious increase in people which may need to cross this very busy road.

In the times of the ring road, there were accessible subways used to cross safely, one of which went beneather Elwick Road, coming out directly in front of the new building.

It would be beneficial to commuters and pedestrians alike to reopen this subway to prevent the continuous use of the traffic lights for people to cross. Have Ashford Borough Council looked into this or is it costs before safety?

Brian Marchant,
Ashford

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Folkestone Harbour

by **Ernie Jordan from Margate**

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Back to the 60s Party Breaks Sale

2 nights half board from £129pp

Stoke Rochford Hall, Linconshire

Quote: SR-KOS

Join us for a 60s themed private party break, for over 40s only, at Stoke Rochford Hall in the heart of rural Lincolnshire near Grantham. Enjoy live entertainment each night and free access to the hotel's leisure club with gym, heated covered pool, sauna and steam room.

INCLUDED: 2 or 3 nights en-suite accommodation • Breakfasts & dinners • Entertainment each night

2 NIGHTS HALF BOARD

- **30 March was £139pp Sale £129pp** Frankie Valli tribute; Dave Grant (ex-Paper Lace) sings the 60s plus the Cufflinks
- **14 April was £149pp Sale £139pp** The Beatle (Beatles tribute), Vicki Lambert as Dusty Springfield
- **15 April was £149pp Sale £139pp** Vicki Lambert as Dusty Springfield plus comedy singer Ian Larkin

3 NIGHTS HALF BOARD

- **14 April was £199pp Sale £179pp** The Beatle (Beatles tribute), Vicki Lambert as Dusty Springfield plus comedy singer Ian Larkin



Slovenia & Croatia Coast & Country Explorer

9 days half board from £1149pp

By Air from Gatwick

21 September, 2017 • Quote: SC9-KOS

Join us on a super 2-centre escorted holiday taking-in the delights of Slovenia and Croatia. Experience the charming Slovenian capital, Ljubljana and the stunning beauty of lakes Bled and Bohinj plus pretty Piran, pictured above. The journey between the coast and Bled includes a ride on the Bohinj Railway, one of Europe's great train journeys. On Croatia's Istrian peninsula we stay in charming Poreč, visit historic Pula and cruise to Rovinj, widely regarded as Croatia's most picturesque town. We also visit Lim Fjord, location of the 1958 film The Vikings, and Opatija, one of Croatia's finest coastal resorts.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad • Return flights with luggage to Venice - supp't may apply • 3 nights half-board stay at a 4-star hotel in Bled, Slovenia • 5 nights half board stay at a 4-star hotel in Poreč, Croatia • All excursions • Transfers abroad

*Conditions apply to low deposit - call for details



We Love the 60s Seaside Christmas Parties

3 nights half board PLUS from £139pp

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

10 & 17 November, 2017 • Quote: CP11-1/2-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for an early taste of Christmas - for over 40s only - as we rock the weekend away to the sounds of the 60s. Our brilliant November 10 entertainment bill features Marty Wilde and the Wildcats, Union Gap, The New Honeycombs, Dave Grant of Paper Lace and The Beatle (John Lennon tribute). You'll enjoy non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and half-price drinks at this rockin' party weekend.

November 17 entertainment features The Barron Knights, The Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) and The New All Stars.

INCLUDED: Half Price bar drinks - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers - lunch times and evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking



Kitzbühel Alpine Rally Tyrol Trains & BMW World

8 days from £1099pp

By Air from Gatwick

6 June, 2017 - Quote: KA6-KOS

Beautiful old motor cars and spectacular scenery, a visit to BMW World, two scenic train rides, a lunch at an altitude of 1200m and free drinks every night combine to make a Tyrolean experience like no other. The Kitzbühel Alpine Rally is considered one of the best classic car events in the Alps. We will visit Kitzbühel to soak up the nostalgic atmosphere in this glorious Alpine setting and to witness the final vehicle parade through the centre.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad • Return flights to Munich with luggage - supp't may apply • Overnight B&B accommodation in Munich • Six nights' half board 3-star hotel in Westendorf with free drinks - beer, wine and soft drinks 6pm to 10pm • Five packed lunches plus one lunch in an Alpine Restaurant • All excursions • Transfers abroad

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Main dealer servicing

Servicing is the secret to car life

PRICES don't seem to come down, yet cars represent better value now than ever before thanks to more quality, comfort, economy, specification and reliability.

But owners still need to uphold the service schedule and ensure repairs are carried out swiftly and competently.

The best guarantee used to be a full main dealer service history (FMDSH), a reassuring record that everything required for the manufacturer's warranty had been carried out. But this became seen as a restrictive practice, so 2002 EU legislation stopped manufacturers insisting that their franchise network maintained the cars they sold, to keep the guarantee intact.

Nevertheless, many car buyers still think main dealer franchising is the best way to protect the part-exchange or second-hand value of the car, since used-car-buyers will usually pay a premium for a full main dealer service history on sophisticated models.

But sceptics claim that this perceived premium is wiped out by higher main dealer service bills. Maybe, but manufacturers and their dealer networks have raised their game since the 2002 legislation.

Indeed, with car sales and profits squeezed, dealers have become more competitive on servicing, created cost-effective service plans, enhanced customer service, and specialised in ancillaries like tyres and exhausts – normally the preserve of the quick-fits.

They have also banked on the perception that a main dealer's service technicians know its brand of cars best.

In addition, they can expect satisfied service customers to keep coming back, exposing them to the franchise's latest models – maybe they will be tempted to buy again?

> **"Cars represent better value now than ever before**



Nissan Qashqai



Mercedes Benz technician works on Citan



Peugeot 308

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B	£265.00+VAT	£265.00+VAT	£240.00+VAT	£199.00+VAT

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Mercedes Benz Citan

IT'S tempting to try to save the car budget by using a local 'quick/fast-fit' centre.

These have prospered as drivers try to save on motoring 'consumables': exhaust, tyres, batteries, clutches, shock absorbers, air conditioning checks and routine services.

But main dealers have hit back, reckoning that if drivers are still using their service bays, they'll be open to realistic deals on such items to ensure a time-saving one-stop shop purchase.

Using a main dealer also guarantees genuine manufacturers' parts are used, bringing the confidence of additional quality and reliability.

> **"A customer can decide what he wants and know in advance what it will cost**



Technician checks car during a service

And that same guarantee, plus realistic pricing has encouraged getting bodyshop repairs done either by the franchise or one with its seal of approval.

Main dealers have also borrowed from quick-fit rivals, by offering menu pricing: a customer can decide what he wants and know in advance what it will cost.

Some dealers will even let you spread the cost via a finance or servicing scheme. They may also offer a loyalty scheme to retain owners of older models rather than see them defect to the non-franchised sector, because those owners believe their car's lower value does not warrant the higher perceived cost of main dealer servicing.

Another trick borrowed from the quick-fitters is longer opening hours; dealers realise many customers want to drop their car off early on their way to work and collect at the end of the day – a courtesy car may even be offered.

Centralised bookings can often be made too, so that customers living midway between franchised dealers within the same group can pick the most convenient service slots available.



Peugeot 2008

Your checklist to vehicle's long life

MODERN cars may be more reliable than ever before, but there's less that the DIY mechanic can do.

So, keeping the car reliable and safe is now best left to professionals and, of course, it costs.

Unfortunately, this often means that owners ignore problems for too long and servicing is stretched beyond recommended parameters, risking the car's warranty and provenance when you come to sell.

So:

- Get it serviced at the correct mileages or annually and have the servicing record stamped, although many brands are switching to centralised digital records.
- Check the warranty – know the pitfalls that could endanger the guarantee.
- Act on recalls from the manufacturer for checks or replacements – it helps maintain the car's warranty and future saleability.
- Don't rely on the MOT certificate to assure the car's safety and reliability. Problems can arise at any time, so have them looked at immediately.
- Check lights and tyres regularly for safety and legality.

The latter must be at the correct pressures listed in the handbook or a sticker often placed on the driver's door frame.

Legal tread depth is 1.6mm, but most motoring authorities advise replacement at 2mm, especially in winter.

- Keep oil, washer, coolant, power steering, clutch and brake fluid levels topped up without over-filling, and make those checks on level ground.

Don't wait for warning lights – it could be too late to prevent damage, or may compromise safety.

- There is little point in keeping the washer topped up if wiper blades are worn or split.

And if the windscreen is covered with bugs and grease, don't expect the washer and wipers to do the job for you – use a spray or car wash, and some elbow grease.

- Shop around for servicing.

Even if you are committed to main dealer servicing, you don't have to use the one where you bought the car – some are better on pricing and customer service than others.

> **"Keeping the car reliable and safe is now best left to professionals and, of course, it costs.**



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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 39.2 (7.2)–47.1 (6); extra-urban 60.1 (4.7)–62.8 (4.5); combined 50.4 (5.6)–55.4 (5.1). The official CO_2 emissions are 127–114g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real life driving results.

New Clio Dynamique Nav 1.2 16v 75 monthly payment based on £2,133 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £149, optional final payment of £5,418. Captur Dynamique Nav TCe 90 monthly payment based on £2,537 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £159, optional final payment of £6,674. All-New Mégane Hatch Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £3,256 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £219, optional final payment of £6,360. Kadjar Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £2,913 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £199, optional final payment of £10,018. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31st March 2017. Excludes New Clio Expression models. Captur shown with metallic paint, and painted roof at an extra £894. New Clio shown has optional metallic paint, available at £625. Kadjar shown has optional metallic paint, available at £645. All-New Mégane Hatch shown with optional metallic paint, available at £545.

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17 PLATE

driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk





GAMBLE: Many doubted the wisdom of Toyota's dogged support for hybrids against diesel power. Now it looks a shrewd bet



Toyota's seven-strong line of attack starts to deliver

TOYOTA'S commitment to petrol-electric hybrids once looked foolhardy in the face of diesel dominance - until the VW 'Dieselgate' scandal, and belated concern about diesel emissions generally.

Of course, Toyota makes diesels too, but the oilier fuel's fall from grace couldn't be better timed as the world's biggest carmaker goes into hybrid overdrive, with seven petrol-electric models on the UK market alone.

Three wear a Prius badge: the latest version of the world's best known hybrid, and a plug-in variant allowing even greater use of the car's batteries for full EV (electric vehicle) operation – both versions have a capacious five-door hatchback body - and then there's the Prius+, a pumped-up seven-seat hatch/MPV.

The mainstay straight hybrid is the most efficient Prius yet, with CO2 emissions from 70g/km and combined fuel economy from 94.2mpg, yet still capable of 0-62mph in 10.6 seconds.

Such improvement was enabled by a major redesign to save weight, improve efficiency and boost aerodynamics – the last emphasised by futuristic looks.

A more compact yet powerful battery helps performance and easier packaging completely beneath the back seat, avoiding compromise to boot space – the bane of hybrid and electric cars.



It also becomes the first Prius able to pull a trailer. But Toyota's vision extends far beyond its original hybrid and almost to the ends of its UK range, from a Yaris supermini variant up to a hybrid version of its highly successful RAV4 SUV.

There is yet more choice in the middle of the Toyota line-up, with the Auris hatchback and Touring Sports (estate) option, and the eye-catching new C-HR sporting crossover being offered with petrol-electric power.

Comforting to know that Toyota is still in touch with its sporting side though – a supercharged Yaris hot hatch is due later this year.

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Tel: 0844 822 7169
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Motability

*Verso Active 1.6 V-matic Manual at NIL Advance Payment. Model shown is a Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £95 Advance Payment. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Icon 5 door 1.4 D-4D Manual at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Auto at NIL Advance Payment, and Auris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.8 VVT-i Auto at £495 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st January and 31st March 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 32.8 (8.6), Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7), Combined 41.5 (6.8). CO_2 Emissions 157g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Yaris Icon 5 door 1.4 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 67.3 (4.2), Extra Urban 91.1 (3.1), Combined 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 Emissions 91/km. Yaris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Auto. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 91.1 (3.1), Extra Urban 85.6 (3.3), Combined 85.6 (3.3). CO_2 Emissions 75g/km. Auris Hybrid Icon 5 door 1.8 VVT-i Auto. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 80.7 (3.5) Extra Urban 80.7 (3.5) Combined 78.5 (3.6). CO_2 Emissions 82g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.



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Peugeot 3008 wins top Euro car prize

High quality new French SUV is deserved winner of top British and European motor industry award as critics put it ahead of Alfa Romeo and Mercedes Benz

Peugeot 3008 GT Line BlueHDi 120

Price:	£27,345
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Seat Ateca

IN the end, it wasn't such a surprise that Peugeot's chic new 3008 SUV was crowned European Car of the Year 2017.

A judging panel - 58 leading motoring scribes from 22 countries – reviewed the best new arrivals over the past year and awarded 319 points to the 3008, taking the French marque's CotY tally to five since its first win in 1969.

The svelte Alfa Romeo Giulia saloon polled 296 for second place, but a protracted launch phase that could just as easily have qualified it for 2016's award, probably didn't help in the final analysis.

The final podium place then went to the latest Mercedes-Benz E-Class, a long way behind on 197 points.

The Peugeot clearly knocked their socks off, with a style and class rare in the SUV sector at sensible prices, and certainly a lot better than the rather frumpy original 3008.

The upmarket look and feel aligns with Peugeot's market ambitions, highlighted by GT and GT Line flagship models being offered in the eye-catching and racy 'Coupe Franche' vertical two-tone paint job, debuted on the 308 GTi.







Versatility is also better: at 4.45 metres, it's 8cm longer - with a stretched wheelbase - boosting passenger and luggage space while remaining more compact than rivals.

It has one of the segment's largest and most versatile load capacities: the 520-litre boot (beneath the luggage cover) is almost 90 bigger than before and expands to a fully flat 1,580-litre load floor.

This extra space also comes with a 100-kilo saving over the old car – more than the 84 kilos of the average UK male – translating into better fuel efficiency, impressive refinement and ride comfort, and an agility highlighted by flatter cornering and the response through the small and sporty squared off wheel.

High spec models also retain the old 3008's GripControl, a clever traction control on the front driving wheels enabling the car to act like a 4x4 in all but the most challenging situations, while saving all the weight and expense of a full 4x4.

The interior is upmarket, highlighted by an eight-inch touchscreen, augmented with distinctive 'piano-keys' to input some commands – Peugeot has clearly noted criticism from owners about everything being routed through a screen.

Prices from £21,795 might look high, but closer inspection of the equipment list, classy looks and finish, show the 3008 is great value.

As ever with Peugeot, there is good choice in petrol and diesel engines too, plus auto options and a hybrid likely later. My favourite is the upmarket 1.6-litre 120PS (118bhp) GT Line diesel manual.



MOTORLINE CANTERBURY
Broad Oak Road, CANTERBURY CT2 7PX.
01227 451 791 canterbury.peugeot.co.uk

MOTORLINE MEDWAY
Centurion Close, Gillingham Business Park, GILLINGHAM ME8 0TZ.
01634 624 285 rochester.peugeot.co.uk

PEUGEOT RECOMMENDS TOTAL Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the all-new 3008 SUV Range are: Urban 37.2 67.3 (7.6 - 4.2), Extra Urban 55.4 - 80.7 (5.1 - 3.5), Combined 47.1 - 70.6 (6.0 - 4.0) and CO_2 136 - 103 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Visit Peugeot.co.uk for more information. Information correct at time of going to print.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Kent Hospitality has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities: Plays, Live and Recorded Music, Performance of Dance, Sale of Alcohol (on and off the premises) from 09:00 to 23:45hrs Monday to Saturday and 09:00 to 21:45hrs on Sunday; Late Night Refreshment from 23:00 to 24:00 hrs Monday to Saturday, all at the following premises: External area surrounding Turing College, The University of Kent, Giles Lane, Canterbury CT2 7FN.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 13/04/2017. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

The Salutation Hotel Ltd of The Salutation, Knightrider Street, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9EW has applied to Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003.

A copy of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Dover District Council offices, address above.

The licensable activities will be Plays, Live and Recorded Music, Performances of Dance, Late Night Refreshment (all indoors) from 23:00 to 24:00hrs., Films from 10:00 to 24:00hrs. (indoors only from 18:00hrs), Supply of Alcohol from 10:00 to 24:00 hrs every day.

Any representations in respect of the application should be made in writing to the Licensing Department, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent, CT16 3PJ by 13th April 2017. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

Motor Trade

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Caffyns PLC, based just off the A21 on the North Farm Retail Park in Tunbridge Wells is the leading ŠKODA and SEAT dealer in Kent and Sussex, and we are experiencing high levels of growth in all areas of the business. To help us cope with this demand, we need to recruit additional individuals with high levels of skill, experience and a willingness to deliver great customer service.

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WORKSHOP CONTROLLER — **OTE £30,000**

Heading up a team of 8 hungry technicians requires a high level of personal organisation coupled to a flexible attitude, good basic computer skills and an ability to remain calm under pressure. You should have the ability to communicate well at all levels, and be able to interpret feedback from customers, service advisors and our team of technicians. This position may well suit an experienced service advisor who is looking to take the next step up towards management.

MASTER TECHNICIAN — **OTE £35,000**

Candidates should have relevant VW Group qualifications at Master Technician level, or should be capable of stepping up within a reasonable timeframe to that level. We will support you with full ongoing training and we can offer good career development opportunities.

SKILLED TECHNICIAN — **OTE £30,000**

Candidates should be qualified to at least NVQ level 3 or equivalent, and should have a minimum of 3 years' experience at this level. We can offer successful candidates an unbeatable package, including ongoing training, a great work environment, backed up by major investments in modern equipment. You should ideally come from within a franchised dealer background, but this is not essential, as we are committed to providing our staff with the highest levels of training.

SERVICE ADVISOR — **OTE £28,000**

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Walker welcomes batsman signing

Joe Weatherley, 20, joined on loan from Hampshire this week

Cricket

By Mark Pennell
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



BOSS: Matt Walker

THE seemingly unflappable demeanour of Kent's newly appointed head coach Matt Walker appears to be coping admirably with a couple of unforeseen issues that have failed to dent spirits at the county's pre-season training camp.

With captain Sam Northeast and opening batsman Daniel Bell-Drummond absent on representative duty in Dubai and no overseas professional yet confirmed, Walker could have done without the visa issues that have thus far prevented either Allan Donald or Jason Gillespie from joining Kent as his right-hand man.

On a more positive front, Walker will be relieved that strike bowler Matt Coles is recovering well from a procedure to remove a varicose vein from his troublesome big toe and has joined the remainder of his squad back in training at The Spitfire Ground St Lawrence.

The head coach is also pleased to have added 20-year-old Joe Weatherley to the Kent squad.

The rookie top-order batsman and off-spinner has joined on long-term loan from Hampshire with the intention of adding to his nine first XI appearances for the south coast county.

"He's a very fine young batter," Walker said this week.

"I'd not seen that much of him personally before he came to us, but, from what I've seen he's a very well organised young cricketer who is highly regarded by Hampshire.

"He's very ambitious, has a good cricket brain and is a good lad, who has fitted in brilliantly since he's been with us.

"Joe has captained England Under-19s, so has an experienced head on young shoulders in that regard.

"He also adds to our batting unit and that's the message I wanted to get across to Joe, he's part of our squad and is challenging for a first team place.

"He gives us depth and creates competition for places, which is exactly what we wanted.

"[Hampshire] were keen to get him out on loan and were also keen for him to come to us which is flattering for our players and the coaching set up we have here."

Truck racing championships return to Brands

Motorsport



THRILL: Truck racing

BRANDS Hatch is revving up for its first major event of the year next weekend, when the British Truck Racing Championship (BTRC) headlines a feast of family entertainment on and off the track.

Featuring five-tonne trucks racing at speeds of up to 100mph, and with drivers not afraid of a little contact, the BTRC is one of the most exciting forms of motorsport.

A thrill-packed eight-round schedule, with five races scheduled for main raceday Sunday, guarantees an adrenaline-filled weekend.

The BTRC grid will expand this season, with reigning champion Ryan Smith set to battle four-time champion Mat Summerfield and ten-time champion Stuart Oliver for supremacy in the top Division One class.

There will be an equally intense fight in Division Two, where West Kingsdown's Steven Powell is aiming to regain the title he last won in 2015.

He'll be fighting established aces plus a continental contingent that includes drivers from as far afield as the Netherlands and Finland.

Powell, who is also involved behind the scenes of the championship, said: "We're expecting at least 25 trucks to take part over the weekend, so it should be a great event, and being my home round it's good to have friends and family here.

"I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into the Division Two fight; I won it in 2011 and 2015, so a third title would be fantastic, especially if I can do it by the time we come back here in November."

Sport Shorts

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Pennock hands Gills scholars pro contracts



AMBITIOUS: Ady Pennock

GILLINGHAM head coach Ady Pennock has handed professional contracts to five second-year scholars.

Defenders Finn O'Mara and Aaron Simpson, midfielders Ben Chapman and Brad Stevenson, and striker Noel Mbo will turn professional with the club in July.

Attacking midfielder Stevenson (18) has already made his first-team debut for the Gills, having been a substitute in August's Checkatrade Trophy match against Luton Town.

Simpson, 17 has captained the under-18s throughout the season; he and Mbo, who turns 18 today, were on the bench for February's away game against Swindon Town.

Central midfielder Chapman and right-back O'Mara, both 18, have also been named as subs this season.

Pennock said: "I wish them every success in the future, they're all eager to learn and I believe they are all capable of going on to claim a place in our starting XI before too long."



VENUE: Photo by Snap Shot Pics

Buckmore Park and Lydden Hill join forces

THE national homes of karting and rallycross have joined forces after a commercial partnership deal was struck between the two Kent circuits.

Buckmore Park in Chatham, which now celebrates 54 years in operation, offers kart races and corporate days, and Lydden Hill, located between Canterbury and Dover, offers public track days for both cars and bikes.

Fifty years ago Lydden hosted the very first rallycross event, and in 2017 hosts World RX of Great Britain, the UK round of the FIA World Rallycross Championship on May 27-28.

"We have a number of ideas for joint mutual working in the pipeline, across karting, bikes and cars, which we hope to announce soon," said marketing manager, Louise Price.

Mos eye silverware in big final

THE Invicta Dynamos take on the Chelmsford Chieftains tonight (Sunday) hoping to lift the NIHL Southern Cup.

The Gillingham ice hockey outfit travelled to Essex last night (Saturday) for the first leg of the final - with the decider getting under way at 5.15pm today at the SilverBlades Ice Rink.

The tie is surrounded by a sense of déjà vu after the Dynamos narrowly overcame the Chieftains to take the silverware just two years ago but Chelmsford, who recently reclaimed the league title, will be in no mood to lose out again and retain the cup they won themselves just last season.

A big crowd is expected so fans are urged to get there early to ensure a seat.

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